

GERMAN WAR
RUSSIAN PEACE
THE HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY

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ANTAL ULLEIN-REVICZKY

GERMAN WAR RUSSIAN PEACE

THE HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY



Translated by Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky
from the original French

GUERRE ALLEMANDE, PAIX RUSSE
LE DRAME HONGROIS

Éditions de la Baconnière – Neuchâtel 1947
La Presse Française et Étrangère – Paris

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THE UNTOLD STORY: GERMAN WAR—RUSSIAN PEACE

FOREWORD

Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky

German War—Russian Peace is my father's personal account of Hungary in the disastrous years of 1938 to 1945, and the role he himself played in the largely unknown efforts to fend off disaster. As the pages of his memoir unfold one feels the ebb and flow of Hungarian history, from the tentative diplomatic efforts of Teleki, to the manoeuvres of Bárdossy, and the wishful thinking of Kállay.

The cover photo of this book with father's handwritten caption: "Telling a story to little Lovice about bad people who invaded Hungary" was my own choice, this book is that story. I was too young to remember much of the war, least of all the dangerous game both my parents played in the Resistance. It is well known that the Nazis proved their appreciation of my father's work in depriving him of his Hungarian citizenship and in condemning him to death "in absentia". It is now time for this unforgettable narrative, composed from father's personal experience, to be retold and preserved for a new generation.

This is a true firsthand account of events in wartime Hungary in which facts speak for themselves, every character mentioned herein is, or rather was, a living person, and every event described is one in which my father was either witness or participant. These significant events have to be brought to light, because, clearly presented as they are, it is undeniable that these pages vividly illuminate what happened to wartime Hungary, a small country caught in the middle between the barbaric desires of Nazi Germany and the despotic regime of Soviet Communism. From the beginning of the war my father was a key figure in the political life of his

country, with unprecedented power concentrated in his hands. The chapters where he recounts his negotiations from his post as Hungarian Minister in Stockholm with American and British intelligence representatives about possible Allied military intervention in Hungary, and his impassioned pleas to the Government of the King of Sweden already in early April 1944 to save Hungarian Jewry, are of exceptional current interest, while recent research exploring his close links to Raoul Wallenberg leaves open many intriguing issues.

I should like to share with you the words of Professor Barry Rubin¹: “There is no doubt in my mind that the heroism of several Hungarians, including your father, is a very important untold story, as dramatic as it is moving. I also feel that the story of Central Europe and Hungary during the Nazi German and Communist period is disgracefully not being told in Western Europe and North America today.” *German War—Russian Peace* is now being published in English for the first time. It is hard to fathom why we had to wait so long.

In 1991 as we turned away from one of the darkest pages of the history of the twentieth century, when half of Europe disappeared behind the Iron Curtain and borders were walls of death, the dream I never dared hope to see fulfilled was at last a reality, Hungary was free of Soviet domination, and I was free to return to my homeland. I left my native city, Budapest, on Monday, September 20, 1943 with my beloved parents when I was too young to realise just what was happening, but my Mother recorded the event in her diary:

It was a warm, cloudless day for our departure from Budapest to Stockholm, we arrived at Keleti Station to find it thronged and not only with our friends but with a Company of the Frontline Fighters’ Association. It was an imposing spectacle, a military band, flags, uniforms and a huge crowd, their hearts full of hope. Ullein-Reviczky was leaving for Stockholm he would do everything in his power to save Hungary from her enforced ally, Nazi Germany. The band played my favourite Rákóczi March, the train starts moving, an uproar rents the air: Not yet! Not yet... the train stops. Twice it started, twice it was stopped... My eyes once more embrace the scene: Government members, Senators, Deputies, the neutral

Ambassadors with their staffs, all our friends, and last but not least, the crowd who kept on cheering again and again ... and the last words I heard as, finally, the train glided out was from an old peasant woman: God be with you and bring you back to us. Your husband will be our Saviour! ... A few hours later we reached our last Hungarian station, I got off the train for a few minutes with as many of my bouquets as I could manage. I laid them down in front of our flag and said good-bye to the Hungarian soil; the masses of red roses were a symbol of my love for Hungary.

In Stockholm I had an American governess, Emma Nelson, Missy for short. Some years ago Missy wrote a short essay about our time in Stockholm and I was judged to have a strong will and determination. This has not always been a good thing, but it has helped to carry me through a life of many adventures.

My late father, Antal Ullein-Reviczky, a well-known Christian opponent of Nazism and a key figure of the Hungarian resistance movement dedicated his life work to freedom: freedom for individuals as well as for nations, his vision of the future was absolutely clear, in February 1954 he said this union based on the voluntary association of equal partners, is a vision of the future. Today we call it the European Union.

In 1945, Soviet troops marched into Hungary, and having lost everything in our homeland, we left Stockholm on July 9 at 10.40 a.m. for the Port of Göteborg. On July 14 we boarded the M/S “Skogaland” for our long sea voyage to Istanbul, Turkey, where my maternal grandparents, Cyril James and Marie Cumberbatch, had a house at Kandilli on the shores of the Bosphorus. It was in Kandilli that Antal Ullein-Reviczky wrote *Guerre allemande-paix russe*, which was published in 1947 by Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. On Friday, October 1, 1948 we moved to Geneva where I attended primary school École Brechbühl. We then went to Paris where I continued my education at Collège d’Hulst and later to London, where I attended St. Paul’s Girls’ School followed by Central Saint Martins University of the Arts London. On March 20, 1958 I was presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the last Court presentation party to be held at Buckingham Palace.

In 1955 my life was, however, cut short when my father died unexpectedly at the early age of sixty-one, the result of a broken heart when he finally had to accept that Hungary was lost to him forever. It was then that I made a promise to return to Hungary when, by the grace of God, it would be free at last.

The wheel turned full circle when on one fine day in September of 1992, on my first visit to Hungary, I chanced upon a property in northeast Hungary. Kelecsénypuszta was the name of this historical treasure situated within an area of national ecological importance for wildlife, flora and fauna, which had been all but destroyed by the Communist regime. I bought it at public auction without having the slightest idea what I was letting myself in for, but with the thought foremost in my mind that this was the place from which I could follow in my father's footsteps and help rebuild my country. In his words: "To do his utmost to help resurrect the mortally wounded Patria is a duty incumbent on each citizen worthy of the name, in my eyes it is a sacred duty."

I had no time to lose, as I was starting with a minus handicap of half a century. In 1993 my father's memory was honoured in a two day Whitsun Festival in Budapest headed by President Árpád Göncz, Prime Minister József Antall, Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky, Minister of Culture (and later president of Hungary) Ferenc Mádl, members of the government and dignitaries from all over the world. On the first evening of the Festival, May 31, 1993, at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, the Antal Ullein-Reviczky Freedom Prize was awarded to the Hungarian cinematographer Sándor Sára and the first Hungarian edition of *German War—Russian Peace*, *Német háború-orosz béke* was presented to President Göncz and all the attendees.

My first major task was to bring Kelecsény back to life. Those early years did not go smoothly, but the sense of adventure and hope in the air gave me the strength to overcome many roadblocks. "Never, never, never give in!"² was my motto. And still is! In 2001 the newly restored Kastély and surrounding property was inaugurated as the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Centre by the President of Hungary, Dr. Ferenc Mádl, and has since seen many major international events. In 2010 His Holiness Pope Benedict XIV awarded me the title of Dame of the Order of St. Sylvester, and the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Dr. Juliusz Janusz blessed the newly built Chapel Sancta Maria Auxilium Christianorum. In 2011 I received the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award from the Secretary of State for Culture, Géza Szöcs, and

in 2012 Hungary's President Dr. János Áder awarded me the Order of Merit of Hungary (Magyar Érdemrend) and in 2014 the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (Magyar Érdemrend tisztikeresztje).

In 2007 I started to translate the original French text *Guerre allemande, paix russe* into English, which required a great learning curve. Then all at once my entire archive of perfectly preserved historical documents came to life, particularly after I opened my mother's diaries, which offered a social history that ran parallel to my father's political history. Mother extensively documented details of both public and private life and it is largely thanks to her notes that details of the so far unexplored bond between Raoul Wallenberg and my father emerged.

My father died in exile and was buried in London, with my Mother—who died in London in January 1990—beside him, their lives bound by a deep bond of affection and the sharing of countless challenges and tragedies.

I dedicate this first edition of *German War—Russian Peace* to my beloved father, Professor Dr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky and my beloved mother, née Lovice Louisa Grace Cumberbatch.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the publication of the Hungarian version of this book, *Német háború – orosz béke* in 1993 there has been high demand worldwide for an English edition. First and foremost I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Dr. Tibor Frank for sharing his unparalleled fund of knowledge and for his introduction. A special thank you to our lector Adjunct Professor at Columbia University, New York, Ivan Sanders. The completion of this volume could not have been accomplished without the eagle eye of our production manager, Balint Bethlenfalvy. To historian Dr. Katalin Kádár-Lynn, Editor and Publisher at Helena History Press, who published this volume, there is a saying that every nice piece of work needs the right person in the right place at the right time,³ thank you Kati!

My thoughts are with Dr. József Antall (April 8, 1932–December 12, 1993) who was the first democratically-elected Prime Minister of Hungary after the fall of Communism. Below is an excerpt from the Statement of Prime Minister Dr. József Antall on the occasion of the 1993 Budapest Whitsun Festival in honour of the late Antal Ullein-Reviczky:

Ullein-Reviczky: An example to all of us

Antal Ullein-Reviczky was brave enough to take up a stand against Hitler at a time when he risked his life by doing so, today we are aware of how many people Antal Ullein-Reviczky negotiated with at home and abroad in his efforts to secure enough help from western powers for Hungary to be able to withdraw from the war. He was a political realist, a democratic figure whose life and work can serve as an example to all of us.⁴

I treasure the memory of Dr. Ferenc Mádl, President of Hungary 2000–2005, who inspired and encouraged me to follow my dream and take special pleasure in thanking his wife, Dalma, for her support and friendship since my return to Hungary.

A very special thank you to Professor Ignác Romsics, who most generously allowed us to use some of the original notes he supplied for the 1993 Hungarian edition, *Német háború – orosz béke*. To Ambassador Gábor Szentiványi my gratitude for his guidance and his wishes for the successful completion of this book.

Grateful thoughts to Professor John Lukacs who wrote “my appreciation for your father is considerable”. A sincere thank you to Professor István Deák, Professor Barry Rubin, Ambassador Professor Dr. Géza Jeszenszky, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary and Sir Bryan Cartledge KCMG, British Ambassador to the USSR and to Hungary, for their *blurbs*, words of wisdom indeed!

I should like to convey my sincere appreciation to Minister Zoltán Balog, Minister of Human Resources, for his kind interest in this book and am grateful to the *NKA–Nemzeti Kulturális Alap* for their generous grant.

I take sincere pleasure in thanking Peter Czink, president of the International Hungarian Military History Preservation Society, Canada, for his long-standing support. I wish to personally thank Dr. Gergely Pál Sallay, Head of Department of the Museum of Military History, Budapest, for his in-depth study of my father’s medals and decorations and his colleague, Péter Szikits, well known for his photographic skills. My grateful appreciation to the historians Susanne Berger and Dr. Vadim Birstein, who opened the window into the so far unexplored relationship between Raoul Wallenberg and my father with their article, “Not a Nobody: Choice of Raoul Wallenberg in 1944 Not Accidental” (March 19, 2012).

There is one person in my life who urged me on by way of his untiring support and seemingly unlimited belief in me, my heartfelt thanks to Professor Robert Christian Bachmann.

Finally, yet importantly, I cannot leave out my Komondor dogs, Róna, Kelly, and Rony and Szandy with their offspring Rigó, who contributed mightily!

Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky

Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation, Hungary

NOTES

- 1 Barry Rubin was the director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA) Journal, Washington, D.C.
- 2 Address of Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Harrow School on October 29, 1941: “Never give in—never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”
- 3 Mandelbrot, Benoit. 2004. *A Theory of Roughness. A Talk with Benoit Mandelbrot*. Edge.org, December 12, 2004. Online http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/mandelbrot04/mandelbrot04_index.html. Last access: February 12, 2014.
- 4 József Antall, Budapest, May 31, 1993. Translated from the original Hungarian in the archive of the URA Foundation.



INTRODUCTION

Antal Ullein-Reviczky: A Tribute

by Tibor Frank

Hungary's role in World War II has been the subject of heated discussions in both public opinion and among international historians. While the country, under German occupation between March 19, 1944 and April 4, 1945, was responsible for one of the most horrible chapters of the *Holocaust* in April–July 1944, some of the pre-War and War-time governments made efforts to tear it away from Nazi Germany and manoeuvre the nation out of World War II. The question that defined Hungary's foreign policy throughout the interwar years has been termed *Trianon*, a château in the park of Versailles, France and referred to the signing of one of the Paris Peace Treaties, in 1920, that partitioned Hungary and cut off some two-thirds of its territory in favour of the neighbouring countries. The controversial history of Hungary before and during World War II included substantial efforts to win over Nazi Germany as the only country powerful enough to hand back some of the lost territories which in fact did happen in the Vienna awards of 1938 and 1940. In turn, Hungary was to do whatever Germany demanded in terms of the economy, agriculture, and an increasingly aggressive handling of the Jewish population. Hungary introduced a series of anti-Jewish laws in 1938, 1939 and 1941, allowed German troops to cross Hungary on their way to Yugoslavia, declared a state of war on the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain, sent troops to the Soviet Union in an effort to help the German invasion, and became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Holocaust after Hungary's occupation by their German allies in March of 1944.

FACING HITLER

Scholar, diplomat and anti-Nazi politician, Antal Ullein-Reviczky was the Press Chief of Hungary in 1941–1943, under the Bárdossy and Kállay governments, and an erudite, multilingual spokesperson of Hungary in the international arena. This talented and ambitious young man had a long way to go from staunch believer in the imperative of revising the Peace Treaty of Trianon and the leadership of the Hungarian Veterans' Association between 1938 and 1943 to an increasingly valiant opposition to Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Germany and siding with the much cherished idea of a potential surrender to the British and American forces in or after 1943.

Ullein-Reviczky was a key figure of the foreign policy of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay who relied heavily on him until the summer of 1943. As Press Chief, Ullein-Reviczky was doing a difficult job and irritated the Nazis. When, in 1942, his name came up seriously as a potential Foreign Minister of Hungary, the Hungarian Minister to Berlin Gen. Döme Sztójay was told, “even more clearly than before”, by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ernst von Weizsäcker, that Germany would not tolerate Ullein-Reviczky as Foreign Minister of Hungary (*“von uns nicht geduldet werden kann”*) and that von Ribbentrop, “would refuse to have intercourse with such a minister”.¹ When Admiral Horthy visited Hitler in Schloß Kleßheim near Salzburg on April 16–17, 1943, the Führer and German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop singled out Ullein-Reviczky “for repeated condemnation”.² In a defensive posture, the Regent denied all the peace feeling actions of Hungary.³

Press Chief Ullein-Reviczky's strong anti-Nazi stand was a known fact in German, Italian and Hungarian diplomatic circles. The Hungarian Minister to Rome Zoltán Máriássy confidentially warned Ullein-Reviczky in May 1943 that the Germans repeatedly voiced their opinion that “the Hungarian-German differences are not so much the consequences of the intentions of the Hungarian Government but rather of the animosity and the corresponding activities of the Hungarian Press Chief vis-à-vis the Reich. This is what [German] Foreign Minister Ribbentrop declared to [Italian] Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Giuseppe] Bastianini during their recent meeting”.⁴ As the wartime activities of this dedicated opponent of Hitler generated the fury of the German government including the Führer himself, Kállay found it advisable to send his loyal supporter to

neutral Stockholm, Sweden where he headed the Hungarian Legation from late September 1943 through the German occupation of Hungary starting March 19, 1944.

KANDILLI

The Hungarian diplomats stationed in several of the neutral countries such as Antal Ullein-Reviczky, Baron Andor Wodianer, Baron György Bakach-Bessenyei, Baron Gábor Apor and several others, as well as the “peace feelers” such as Nobel Laureate Albert Szent-Györgyi, the journalists András Frey and András Tamás, the future law professor Ferenc Váli, the diplomat László Veress and some others dispatched to centres of politically neutral countries like Istanbul in Turkey, Stockholm in Sweden, Bern in Switzerland, Madrid in Spain or Lisbon in Portugal, represented a Hungary which was anti-Nazi and pro-British, feared and hated the Russians, and hoped for a peaceful revision of the peace treaty of Trianon.⁵

Many of the pro-British activities of Antal Ullein-Reviczky were most probably carried out through his own family in Istanbul. As C. A. Macartney put it,

Ullein-Reviczky, whose wife’s family were British subjects resident in Constantinople, went down to spend his summer holiday with his parents-in-law, and he also, acting (it appears) on his own initiative and authority, took the opportunity to contact the Allied representatives. This offer was taken seriously, and agreement was reached “that a trusted agent, equipped with instructions from the Government and powers from the military authorities, might be sent out”. This reply placed this line on an official footing, and M. Kállay, in his book, ranks it as the earliest of his own attempts to contact the allies.⁶

Ullein-Reviczky regularly spent his summer holidays near Istanbul, in the beautiful little village of Kandilli, overlooking the Bosphorus. His father-in-law, Cyril James Cumberbatch had been given permission to remain in Turkey during the war to look after British interests, while the

U.S. Ambassador had charge of British subjects. “Under his protection we shall be quite safe,” wrote Cumberbatch, “and we firmly believe that Turkey will not succumb to the rigours of the European holocaust.”⁷ Kállay valued these “actual, direct contacts with the British” established in the summer of 1942 and remembered in his memoirs that “Ullein-Reviczky was authorized to establish contacts with British official circles there”.⁸

Mrs. Antal Ullein-Reviczky née Lovice Cumberbatch came from the eminent Cumberbatch family who had represented British interests in the countries of the Levant, foremost among them Turkey, for centuries. The long list of distinguished members of this family included a surprising number of British consul-generals.⁹

The distinguished British origins of his spouse must have affected the thoughts and influenced the life of Antal Ullein-Reviczky, always happy in the company of his in-laws and their circle of friends and relatives in their home on the Bosphorus. Born in Smyrna in 1873, his British father-in-law worked all through his active life in the British consular service in Turkey. He married Marie of the patrician Karatheodori family. He was appointed Clerk in the Consulate General at Constantinople in 1894, promoted to be 1st Clerk in 1911, and Vice-Consul in Constantinople in 1921.¹⁰ As a result of his family background and his extremely long years (1894–1939) at the British Consulate General in Constantinople, he was very well connected and respected in the strange and difficult world of Istanbul. On the retirement of Cyril James Cumberbatch, British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax commented “on the excellent work you have done on behalf of British interests during your service under the Crown. Your zeal and devotion to duty have been worthy of the best traditions of that Service with which your family has been so long associated. [...] British subjects in distress have good cause to remember your self-sacrificing work on their behalf.”¹¹ Cyril James Cumberbatch died in Istanbul in 1944.

The personality of his father-in-law, and his long summer holidays in his stately mansion at Kandilli on the Vaniköy Road with a gorgeous view of the Bosphorus must have been a determining factor in Ullein-Reviczky’s life. “To the rear of this mansion, was a garden on terraces with pistachio trees, very ordered with valuable slabs laid out. This was the location where garden parties were given by the Cumberbatches.”¹² Though retiring in 1939, Cyril James Cumberbatch remained active in many ways during the war. Cyril may have made the connection or at least provided the venue

in the beautiful villa at Kandilli for the meetings of his son-in-law and the Hungarian confidential emissaries. Ullein-Reviczky obviously had a major role in the secret activities of Hungarian emissaries in Turkey, though this may be difficult to fully document at this point of research.

STOCKHOLM

For the newly arriving Minister to Sweden and his wife, Stockholm looked like paradise.

At 10 p.m. we arrived in Stockholm. Wreaths of multi-coloured lights, chains of rubies, emeralds and diamonds, scintillated round the city. Myriads of colours reached the sky. This must be God's Country, I thought.....Stockholm, a dream of beauty, a dream of freedom for us?.....Perhaps?..... And so it was.¹³

Ullein-Reviczky was received with sympathy and understanding in Stockholm.

My first visit to Foreign Minister [Christian] Günther was spent in a half-an-hour conversation. The Foreign Minister welcomed me most amicably. After several, politically indifferent topics, he embarked upon Hungary's foreign policy which he described as "intelligent". (*Vous faites une politique étrangère intelligente.*) [...]

During the course of the latter part of our conversation, he voiced his concern over the events taking place on the Russian front.—He believes that the rise in Russia's power is a threat to Europe. I was able to decipher from his words that he does not have much faith in the Allies' virtue against Russia.—In his opinion, the war is not likely to come to a conclusion within less than a year.¹⁴

Stockholm was and remained the most important point of orientation and information. As Hungarian diplomat and head of the political section of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry Aladár Szegedy-Maszák observed, the new minister “was the first Hungarian diplomat to contact the Soviet embassy”, however, by then it was too late.¹⁵

Upon arrival in Stockholm, Ullein-Reviczky was also received by the King of Sweden. This audience did not turn particularly to foreign policy, but it reflected on Swedish goodwill towards Hungary.

[...] His Majesty King Gustaf V honoured me with a private conversation of some half an hour in duration on the occasion of the delivery of my credentials.—During the course of this conversation, I had the opportunity to give the regards of His Highness, the Regent to His Majesty, which I was engaged to deliver on the occasion of my farewell interview with His Highness. His Majesty acknowledged the communication with gratitude and requested me to likewise give his regards to His Highness. I respectfully take the liberty of requesting Your Excellency to deliver the greetings of King Gustaf V to our Regent.

During the further course of my audience, the King [...] let me understand that he has a favourable disposition towards our country. [...] He wished me a pleasant stay in Sweden, and authorised me at the same time to turn to him, should I feel the need to do so. [...]¹⁶

Arriving in Stockholm in late September 1943, Minister Ullein-Reviczky almost immediately explained to C. C. Parrott, the leader of the British press office, that the Hungarian emissaries in Turkey enjoy the full support of the Hungarian government.¹⁷ Once in a free country, Ullein-Reviczky started negotiating also with the Americans. On December 1, 1943 and January 23, 1944 he had discussions with a U.S. representative of the Allied United General Staff who “was empowered by his H.Q. to say that the Allies would, jointly, discuss Hungary’s surrender in any neutral place that it liked to designate. The British and Americans would be present, which would be more favourable to Hungary than if it had to face Russia alone.”¹⁸

Together with diplomat Andor Gellért, Ullein-Reviczky prepared a memorandum emphasizing three points: “(1) Hungary would not resist British and American troops; (2) Hungary would join the Atlantic Charter, and (3) Hungary would contribute to pacifying and rehabilitating South-Eastern Europe.” The memorandum expressed hopes that the Soviet Union would refrain from attacking Hungary. The memorandum was handed over to the Americans in late December 1943 but by then they found it unrealistic.¹⁹

All this was originally built upon the hope and assumption that there would be a separate British and U.S. victory which would not necessarily mean a Soviet victory as well and that the Anglo-American forces would treat Hungary reasonably well. However, both Ullein-Reviczky and Prime Minister Kállay refused to accept unconditional surrender to the Allies. On February 10, 1944 Kállay made it clear “that Hungary would under all circumstances resist the Russians. [...] The Allies had nothing more to say.”²⁰—C. A. Macartney concluded.

An episode shortly before the German occupation of Hungary shed some light on the deeply anti-Nazi attitude of the Ullein-Reviczky, particularly Mrs. Lovice Ullein-Reviczky. Late in February 1944, the Ullein-Reviczky were invited to a party given in Swedish high society. Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky née Lovice Cumberbatch, a lady born into an English family, had a conversation with the Crown Princess of Sweden. Lovice Ullein-Reviczky spoke of her hope that the war would be soon over and expressed her discontent with Nazi-Germany. She did not know that the Swedish Crown Princess was actually the pro-Nazi German Princess Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1908–1972). The Crown Princess listened to what the wife of the Hungarian Minister had to tell her but soon had enough of it and rudely turned away from her. News of the unpleasant scene reached Budapest soon and Hungarian Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy (1893–1982), in a strictly confidential, hand-written letter felt the need to ask his Minister not to allow his wife to meddle into politics.²¹ For the wife of the Hungarian minister to Stockholm, her homeland was “England, my England, our symbol of Truth and Freedom [...]”.²²

The Hungarian Minister to Stockholm sent important information to Budapest. One of his reports, on “The Russian Threat”, was a veritable study of Soviet intentions in post-War Europe and Soviet/Anglo-American relations, and a serious warning to the Kállay government:

[...] it is no wonder that German propaganda harps on about nothing else but that the Anglo-Saxons threw Europe to the Russians, and therefore, peoples of Europe, unite behind Hitler, who is your only protector. And it is likewise no wonder that many people even believe this. Neither the English, nor the Americans refute the thesis of German propaganda; neither Churchill, nor Roosevelt firmly declares that they will not throw Europe, or even Central Europe to the Russians; on the contrary, visible signs of leniency on their part emerge everywhere. [...]

Based on all the information he obtained, Ullein-Reviczky attempted to summarise the situation and Hungary's prospects therein in a well-structured series of arguments along the following main points:

I In the context of the Soviet expansion, we must distinguish between two types of expansion: 1. territorial expansion and 2. expansion for influence.

1. Territorial expansion causes the Anglo-Saxons a problem on three counts; namely, a) vis-à-vis Finland; [...] b) vis-à-vis Poland; c) The Russian longing for the warm seas.

2. As regards expansion for influence, we may perceive two directions; namely, one of a defensive nature and another of an offensive. Bearing merely Europe in mind at this point in time, there is no real limit to the Soviet expansion of a defensive nature; [...] Soviet expansion of an offensive nature extends to territories through which Moscow intends to secure its power demands, in particular, territories, the "occupation" of which promotes the cause of gaining access to the warm seas. [...]

II The Soviet use their excellent international position to protest against all state formations, which are, *so to speak*, directed against them. The Anglo-Saxons cannot oppose this [...]

III We may nonetheless observe that the Soviet attempt to keep up appearances towards the Anglo-Saxons because they realise that they need them now as well as during the course of the post-war reconstruction work. [...]

IV In the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon relationship there is no question that the Soviet have the upper hand. The Anglo-Saxons will have a stronger position as soon as they, too, are present on the continent with a sizeable army, and this position will be even stronger if the Russians lose further strength. [...]²³

These conditions were unacceptable. The British and the Americans could not undertake any anti-Soviet move and they could not hope for Allied support of Hungarian aspirations to be defended all around from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Romania. The British Foreign Office was reluctant to promise such support knowing that the Allies could not guarantee it.²⁴

According to the comments of Erik Boheman, Swedish Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ullein-Reviczky later

[...] asked Mr. Boheman whether he remembers when he told me after the Moscow Conference that the English and the Americans were pleasantly surprised by the Russians. In answer, his smile was almost distorted into a grin, and he just waved his hand once, saying “Alas, how far we have come since”. In response, I remarked that I had also heard opinions that the Russians’ serial acts of impertinence stem from the agreements reached at the Moscow and Tehran meetings; in answer, he only replied that they only laid down general guidelines on political issues there, presuming that the parties will proceed in good faith. But what will happen now, I asked, given that neither England, nor America tend to go against their recognised interests? The diplomacy of both powers is beginning to discount this recognition, Mr. Boheman said, but *when* this will turn into reality, no one knows; not even they themselves. [...]²⁵

Once Nazi-Germany occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944, Antal Ullein-Reviczky was one of those Hungarian diplomats who did not recognize the new, pro-Nazi puppet regime set up by the Germans. With his wife's British background, Ullein-Reviczky naturally turned against the new government in Nazi-occupied Hungary and fought against the aggression to the bitter end. He was of course less than enthusiastic about the growing Soviet threat as well.

“RELIEVED ... OF HIS OFFICE”

Right after March 19, 1944 the newly appointed Prime Minister of Hungary, Gen. Döme Sztójay, former Hungarian Minister to Berlin and a recognized pro-Nazi, turned immediately against Ullein-Reviczky. Soon enough, telegrams reached Stockholm from Budapest. Gen. Sztójay first declared that “1354 by virtue of resignation of government his highness the regent appointed me as prime minister and also as head of ministry of foreign affairs halt to be notified to government all subordinated offices to be informed—sztojay”. The following day Sztójay added:

re your telegram of twenty-first stop by virtue of his supreme resolution dated today his highness the regent relieved minister ullein reviczky of his office as head of the stockholm legation and of his duties as minister stop in consequence of this i hereby request ullein reviczky to immediately hand over leadership of legation to temporary acting head of legation against taking of due and proper minutes of handover of office and to abstain from all official acts stop due to breach of his official oath, i hereby dismiss ullein reviczky from his service with immediate effect stop he has no claim for pension stop to report on execution of my order by way of telegram—sztojay 1364

As if this was not enough warning that the system had abruptly changed in Hungary, a third telegram “re my claris telegram 1364 based on article c 8 of act 13 of 1939 royal hungarian ministry stripped antal ullein reviczky of his hungarian citizenship on the twenty-fourth of march of this current year 1375—sztojay.”²⁶ The game was over.

As *The New York Times* reported on March 23, 1944, “Dr. Ullein-Reviczky considers the new Cabinet a quisling type imposed on the country against Admiral Nicholas Horthy’s wishes and hence illegal. The entire Stockholm Hungarian Legation backs the Minister’s statement.”²⁷ It must be noted, however, that though Admiral Horthy did not approve the German occupation of his country, he did not oppose the appointment of the Sztójay government and remained silent throughout the Hungarian Holocaust to come.

On March 25, 1944 an article in *The New York Times* was re-printed by the *Los Angeles Times*. Under the title “Nazis Resisted by Hungarians” George Axelsson reported of Dr. Paul Schmidt, the Reich Foreign Office spokesman “to have given the dissident Hungarian envoy, Dr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky, an unintended ‘life’ by violently railing against him during today’s Wilhelmstrasse conference for foreign correspondents in Berlin. Dr. Ullein-Reviczky was called a ‘diplomatic Don Quixote’ who would have been dismissed if he had not been so quick about resigning.”²⁸ In perhaps an unintentionally frank statement, Dr. Paul Schmidt added: “Dr. Ullein-Reviczky [...] nearly topped the list of men slated for removal in the purge now carried out under the direction of S.S. (Elite Guard) Gen. Veesenmayer.”²⁹

Ullein-Reviczky maintained a “free legation” in Stockholm and cooperated with fellow former legitimate ministers of Hungary across Europe such as Ferenc Ambró, Madrid; Baron György Bakách-Besseney, Bern; György Szabó, Helsinki; Baron Andor Wodianer, Lisbon; Dezső Újváry, Istanbul. Baron Gábor Apor, Hungary’s envoy to the Holy See acted, with the assistance of Legation Secretary Tamás Perczel, as an organiser of the group of former Hungarian ministers who hoped to act as a Hungarian government in exile.

I hereby send my fraternal greetings to all my colleagues on this first occasion I have to speak openly. At the same time, I am turning to you with a proposition: it is true that a foreign army broke into the country, imposed its own people on it and terminated constitutional freedom by casting the legislative assembly aside, dissolving the constitutional parties and carrying off their leaders, abolishing the free press and imprisoning its editors; in other words, by silencing all

constitutional factors. Only those are in the position to have the real voice of the nation heard and to express the protest of the nation against the oppression of its ancient freedom who represent the country abroad lawfully and legitimately.

In order to do this as effectively as we can, I propose that we unite into a “committee representing Hungarian freedom”. Its object would be

1. to represent and to preach Hungarian freedom together and to make efforts to restore the same;
2. to keep an eye on every opportunity that may be suitable for restoring the peace of the country in the spirit of justice and, in particular, concord with the direct neighbours.

We shall place all of these elements at the disposal of the government, which will restore law and order and will legitimately represent the nation’s free determination.³⁰

AMONG THE RIGHTEOUS

In 1944 Antal Ullein-Reviczky made several attempts to draw the attention of the Swedish government to the plight of the Hungarian Jewry. Already on April 8, 1944 the by then former minister of Hungary sent a very important letter to Swedish Foreign Minister Christian Günther urging him to help save the largest remaining Jewish community in Europe. “As a consequence of the German occupation of my country,” he wrote,

some 800,000 Hungarians of Jewish religion or ascendancy have been subjected to unprecedented and inhuman persecution. I think I need not relate for Your Excellency details that have been amply reported by the press, among them the decrees, designed to regulate the so-called Jewish question, that were issued by the self-professed government in Budapest, actually an executive organ of the occupying power.

These decrees, Mr. Minister, are wholly illegal, for such a drastic intrusion into the life of citizens would have to be

legislated—though even that is far-fetched—and cannot be enacted by simple “governmental” decrees that have no justification in any Hungarian laws pertaining to Jews. These are purely arbitrary acts!

However, the foregoing is largely a matter of Hungarian domestic legality. What is, in my view, of more immediate interest for those who still respect human rights and are motivated by love of their fellow man is the clear evidence that in the centre of Europe 800,000 human beings face martyrdom.

May I, Mr. Minister, express the hope that the Swedish Government, which has given ample evidence of humanitarian sentiments, will not be indifferent to the fate of these poor people? Allow me to urge, Excellency, that the Royal Government respond to this new wave of human suffering by raising its voice in defence of the persecuted and by taking all measures and initiatives it considers appropriate to alleviate the situation of my Jewish countrymen.³¹

A copy of this letter was sent to, and acknowledged by, both the U.S. and the British ministers in Stockholm. Nothing happened, so it seemed. “In early June 1944, Ullein-Reviczky sent a second round of official appeals to both Swedish and Allied representatives which were met with the same assurances of support.”—Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein stated in an article for the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation where they tried to link the mission of Raoul Wallenberg to Budapest to the social contacts of the Ullein-Reviczkys, in Budapest already in 1943. In the Hungarian capital Wallenberg was invited by József Balogh, a prominent member of former Prime Minister Count István Bethlen’s circle and editor of *The Hungarian Quarterly*. The Ullein-Reviczkys met Wallenberg again in Stockholm in 1943–44.³² And then, in 1944, Raoul Wallenberg, the scion of a major Swedish industrial dynasty was quite suddenly dispatched to Budapest to take care of the Jewish population still alive there. This was not necessarily the making of Ullein-Reviczky alone, but his repeated pleas had a role at a time when the Swedish government favoured American requests “of increasing Swedish representation in Budapest” and hinted at the much

belated prospect “that Sweden already is considering the possibility of sending food to [Hungarian Jews] in concentration camps to be distributed under supervision [...]”.³³ It was too late for most of them, but the Budapest Jewry was still alive and to be saved. Ullein-Reviczky and his wife attended Raoul Wallenberg’s farewell dinner at his mother and stepfather’s residence on July 6, 1944. Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky noted in her diary: “We dined at the von Dardels with Raoul Wallenberg who is leaving for Budapest tomorrow and couple Laurer.”³⁴ In Budapest, Wallenberg used many of Ullein-Reviczky’s contacts such as Dr. Géza Soós, Ullein-Reviczky’s colleague in the Hungarian Press Bureau, the politician and newspaper owner Count Gyula Dessewffy, Miklós Horthy Jr., son of the Regent, aristocrats such as Countess Hetta von Wenckheim and Count Ferdinand Orssich, as well as Heinz von Wahl, as documented by Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein on the basis of the personal diary of Mrs. Antal Ullein-Reviczky.³⁵ In his desperate effort to save the remaining Jews of Hungary, Wallenberg based his Budapest activities to a very considerable extent on the circle of Antal Ullein-Reviczky.

Ullein-Reviczky left Stockholm in the middle of 1945. He went to stay in Istanbul with his by then widowed mother-in-law, then on to Geneva, Switzerland, Paris, France and, ultimately, to London where he became the representative of the Hungarian National Council and, later, the president of the Central European Professors and Lecturers Association. Ullein-Reviczky never returned to Hungary spending his last years in exile.

GUERRE ALLEMANDE, PAIX RUSSE

The former Hungarian Minister lost his position and found his only solace in his *Guerre allemande, paix russe. Le drame hongrois* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1947), published in Switzerland, immediately following World War II. His book was based partly on his personal experiences, partly on the public and private documents he succeeded in saving throughout his years of exile. His book is an important document, mostly unknown in the English-speaking world, of Hungary’s fate during the war years as seen by a key witness and a key player in World War II. The testimony of a shrewd observer and well-informed insider, Ullein-Reviczky’s memoirs represent a unique source to the history of Hungary from “German war

to Russian peace” and give us a rare insight into “the Hungarian tragedy”. This is an important historical source presenting the author’s version of the facts of Hungary in World War II. This remarkable book tried to show that Antal Ullein-Reviczky’s country was a victim and not a friend of Hitler’s Germany. More importantly, this is the personal statement of a man of conscience. The way he reached his final wisdom was long and not without curves. Clearly, he was a “Westerner” among his contemporaries in Hungary, with most of his life spent in foreign countries as a diplomat. But he was a fearless fighter all along, and he gradually changed his mind when he realized that the price to be paid for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon is too high and, ultimately, unacceptable. He is an important figure of international history, worthy of being remembered.

This is a complicated book on a particularly sensitive issue: Hungary in World War II. It is an appropriate tool to show the world that there were Hungarians such as Antal Ullein-Reviczky (there were not too many like him—Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky and István Bethlen were among the few) who looked towards Britain and fought for a different and better future for Hungary—and paid with their whole careers and, ultimately, their lives.

In Hungary, in the tough international and internal situation of the wartime era, there were a number of very different opinions and desires, faiths and illusions living side by side. This volume offers much new material and a number of novel viewpoints to the English-speaking reader for the better understanding of the painful past of the country in general, and the Anglophile political orientation in wartime Hungary in particular.

This volume is now published, for the first time, in a new, authentic, English translation, supplemented with a number of textual and visual documents from the Minister’s personal papers. Miraculously, Antal Ullein-Reviczky’s papers survived World War II and even the many difficulties he and his family faced during the Cold War. They have been lovingly safeguarded by his daughter, Lovice Maria Ullein-Reviczky at her home at Magyarnándor-Kelecsény, Hungary. The present author wishes to thank Lovice Maria Ullein-Reviczky for her unfailing support.

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NOTES

- 1 Note of March, 15, 1942, GFM 2–93. 104695, quoted by György Ránki, *Emlékiratok és valóság Magyarország második világháborús szerepéről. Horthysta politika a második világháborúban* [Memoirs on, and the Realities of, the Role of Hungary in World War II. Horthyite Politics in World War II (2nd ed., Budapest: Kossuth, 1974).177; cp. telegram from Dietrich von Jagow to Berlin, March 8, 1942. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Microcopy T-120, Roll 92, 104668, quoted by Mario D. Fenyo, *Hitler, Horthy, and Hungary: German–Hungarian Relations 1941–1944* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1972), 61. Mario D. Fenyo, op. cit., 62.
- 2 C. A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary 1929–1945*. 2 parts. (Edinburgh: University Press, 1956 and 1957), II, 150; György Ránki, op. cit., 177.
- 3 *Hitler hatvannyolc tárgyalása 1939–1944, Hitler hatvannyolc tárgyalása 1939–1944*, II [Sixty-eight Negotiations of Hitler 1939–1944, II] (Budapest: Magvető, 1983), II, 78–80.
- 4 Zoltán Máriássy to Antal Ullein-Reviczky, Rome, May 14, 1943. Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.
- 5 András Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája. Magyarország és a háborús diplomácia 1942–1944* [The Foreign Policy of Miklós Kállay. Hungary and War Diplomacy 1942–1944] (Budapest, Napvilág Kiadó, 2008), 50–71; cp. Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris, 1999), 210.
- 6 C. A. Macartney, op. cit. II, 122.
- 7 Dorina Lady Neave, *Romance of the Bosphorus: Reminiscences of Life in Turkey* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 192.
- 8 Nicholas Kallay, *Hungarian Premier: A Personal Account of a Nation's Struggle in the Second World War*; foreword by C. A. Macartney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 369–370.
- 9 A select list of members of the Cumberbatch family was compiled courtesy of Lovice Maria Ullein-Reviczky and the internet under Dorina Neave at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorina_Neave and http://books.google.hu/books/about/Twenty_six_Years_on_the_Bosphorus.html?id=sIJCAAAIAAJ&redir_esc=y; <https://www.google.hu/search?tbm=bks&chl=hu&q=Cyril+James+Cumberbatch>.
- 10 *The Foreign Office List and Diplomatic and Consular Year Book, 1917* (Harrison, 1917); *The London Gazette* reporting from the Foreign Office, June 16, 1921; http://books.google.hu/books?id=0BE6AQAAIAAJ&q=Cyril+James+Cumberbatch&dq=-Cyril+James+Cumberbatch&hl=hu&sa=X&ei=fFToUvz_FcWxywPW4LYAw&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAg
- 11 Lord Halifax to C.J. Cumberbatch, Foreign Office, London, S.W.1., February 10, 1939. Original letter in the Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.

- 12 M. Celâlettin Atasoy, *Kandilli'de Tarih* [Kandilli in History] (Istanbul: Türkiye Turing Ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1982), 121.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 "My first visit to Foreign Minister [Christian] Günther," Diplomatic report, of Antal Ullein-Reviczky, October 6, 1943, 112/pol. 1943, Royal Hungarian Legation, Stockholm. Hungarian National Archives, K 63-1943/1944-31, published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 263.
- 15 Aladár Szegedy-Maszák, *Az ember ősszel visszanéz...* [One Looks Back in the Fall...] I–II (Budapest: Európa-História, 1996), II, 312.
- 16 "My audience with the King of Sweden" Diplomatic report of Antal Ullein-Reviczky, October 8, 1943, 113/pol. 1943, Royal Hungarian Legation, Stockholm. Hungarian National Archives, K 63-1943/1944-31, published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 264.
- 17 C. Parrott to W. H. Montagu-Pollock, Stockholm, October 11, 1943, published by Gyula Juhász (ed.), *Magyar–brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban* [Hungarian–British Confidential Negotiations in 1943] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1978), 269.
- 18 C. A. Macartney, op. cit., II, 214.
- 19 Aladár Szegedy-Maszák, op. cit., II, 340–342.
- 20 C. A. Macartney, op. cit., II, 214–5.
- 21 Hungarian Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy to Antal Ullein-Reviczky, Budapest, March 12, 1944. Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.
- 22 Lovice Ullein-Reviczky, A LEAF from my DIARY. Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.
- 23 "The Russian Threat", Classified diplomatic report by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, January 7, 1944, 3/pol. 1944, Royal Hungarian Legation, Stockholm. Hungarian National Archives, K 63-1943/1944-31, published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 274–278.
- 24 The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey: Foreign Office 371 39 251 C 528. Cf. György Ránki: *1944. március 19. Magyarország német megszállása* [March 19, 1944. The German Occupation of Hungary] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1978), 75–76.
- 25 "The Swedish Deputy Foreign Minister's opinion on the Russian threat." Strictly confidential report by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, February 7, 1944, 14/pol. 1944, Royal Hungarian Legation, Stockholm. Hungarian National Archives, K 63-1943/1944-31, published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 281–283. Boheman was a well-informed member of the Swedish government who in his memoirs *På vakt* [On guard] remembered the outstanding work of the Swedish Signal intelligence in monitoring German traffic and its importance for the Swedish government. C. G. McKay–Bengt Beckman, *Swedish Signal Intelligence 1900–1945* (Frank Cass, 2003), Preface.

- 26 Telegrams of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Döme] Sztójay to Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Stockholm, 24–25 March 1944. Hungarian National Archives, K 101-1944-2. t., published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 286–287.
- 27 *The New York Times*, March 23, 1944.
- 28 *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1944.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Telegram by Baron Gábor Apor, Hungarian Minister to the Vatican to Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Stockholm, June 14, 1944. Hungarian National Archives, K 101-1944-2. t., published by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, op. cit., 289–291.
- 31 Antal Ullein-Reviczky to Swedish Foreign Minister Christian Günther, Stockholm, April 8, 1944. Dated but unsigned copy in the Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.
- 32 Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein, “Not a ‘nobody’: choice of Raoul Wallenberg in 1944 not accidental.” The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, March 20, 2012. <http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/news/not-a-nobody-choice-of-raoul-wallenberg-in-1944-not-accidental/> Cp. Tibor Frank, “Luring the English Speaking World: Hungarian History Diverted” *Slavonic and East European Review* 69: pp. 60–80. (1991); Tibor Frank, “Editing as Politics: József Balogh and *The Hungarian Quarterly*,” *The Hungarian Quarterly* XXXIV: (129) pp. 5–13. (1993); “To comply with English taste:” The Making of *The Hungarian Quarterly*, 1934–1944, *The Hungarian Quarterly* XLIV: (171) pp. 112–124 (2003); Tibor Frank, “‘A National Cause’: *The Hungarian Quarterly* and Its Companion Volume, 1943,” *The Hungarian Quarterly* LII: (201) pp. 3–10. (2011).
- 33 Quoted by Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein, op. cit.
- 34 Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein, op. cit.—Raoul Wallenberg was born in 1912, three months after his father’s death and six years before his mother, Maj Wising Wallenberg, became remarried to Fredrik von Dardel.
- 35 Idem. The diary is preserved at Magyarnándor-Kelecsény, in the Ullein-Reviczky Archives.



ILLUSTRATIONS

Antal Ullein-Reviczky with Two Prime Ministers

June 19, 1939, Budapest: ►
Count Teleki receives
the Reich's Press Chief,
Otto Dietrich, Foreign
Minister Count Csáky
in the middle, Antal
Ullein-Reviczky on the
right.

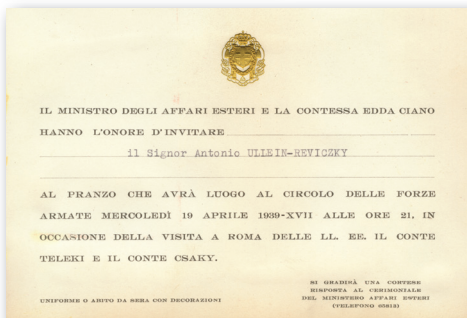
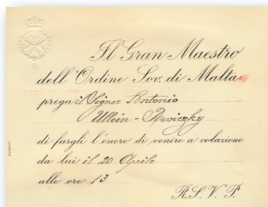


▲
February 27, 1941. The exchange of ratification documents of the Hungarian–Yugoslav Friendship Treaty in the Gobelin Hall of Alexander Palace (Prime Minister's Office). Right-hand corner, seated at desk, Foreign Minister (and from April 7, 1941 Prime Minister), László Bárdossy; beside him Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Aleksander Cincar-Marković; standing behind the table Prime Minister, Count Pál Teleki; behind him, to his left, Press Chief, Antal Ullein-Reviczky.

Visit to Italy



▲
April 20, 1939, the Vatican: Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki with Baron Gábor Apor, Hungarian Minister to the Holy See on his left, and Foreign Minister, Count István Csáky, on his right. Behind Csáky, Antal Ulléin-Reviczky.



◀ April 19, 1939, Rome: Dinner Invitation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Countess Edda Ciano on the occasion of the visit to Rome of Count Teleki and Count Csáky. (Galeazzo Ciano was the son-in-law of Benito Mussolini, who eventually had him executed, and brother-in-law to Vittorio Mussolini.)



◀ June 4, 1941, Rome. The Hungarian Government Delegation on the steps of the Victor Emanuel Monument, Rome. In front, waving, Premier and Foreign Affairs Minister, László Bárdossy, directly behind him, Antal Ullein-Reviczky.



June 11, 1942, Milan: Ullein-Reviczky ▶ saluting the Heroes' Monument after placing the wreath.

Religious and Cultural Diplomacy



June 16, 1942. Prince-Archbishop Jusztinián Serédi arrives in Rome. At Termini Station he is greeted by Gábor Apor, Hungarian Minister to the Holy See, and Antal Ullein-Reviczky.



April 21, 1941. Antal Ullein-Reviczky congratulating State Kapellmeister Herbert von Karajan, who conducted Beethoven's *Leonore* overture prior to the Berlin State Opera's performance of *Elektra*, a one-act opera by Richard Strauss, in Budapest. Seated, the wife of the German Minister Otto von Erdmannsdorff.



Herbert Claiborne Pell, Jr. U.S. Minister to Hungary, 1941, and Olive Pell seated in their drawing-room at the Ritz, their favourite dog at their feet. This photograph was presented to the Ullein-Reviczky by the Pells prior to their departure from Hungary on January 16, 1942. Signed: "With happy remembrances of dear Hungary—and the American Legation."

Antal Ullein-Reviczky and Miklós Kállay

September, 1942, ►
 Budapest: With Prime Minister Kállay and Vittorio Mussolini (1916–1997), second son of Benito Mussolini. He could come and go anywhere, anytime, as he was not his father (luckily for him). He became a film critic and producer and lived a long life, unlike his father.



Frontline Fighters' Association and István Horthy's Funeral Service



- ◀ October 12, 1942. Antal Ullein-Reviczky, National Co-President of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association, opens the Festival of the Southland Combatants in Szabadka (now Subotica, Serbia).



- ▲ August 27, 1942, Budapest: Requiem for the Deputy Regent of Hungary, István Horthy, who died in an aeroplane crash on the Soviet front on the day of Saint Stephen, August 20, 1942.

- ▶ May 29, 1943, Nagyvárad: Ullein-Reviczky reviewing a contingent of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association in Nagyvárad (now Oradea, Romania). He wears the collar tabs, shoulder straps, and cap insignia particular to his rank, along with many of his numerous awards and decorations.



Kandilli on the Bosphorus, Turkey



◀ In the garden at Kandilli, Summer 1942, Lovice Louisa Grace and Antal Ullein-Reviczky standing beside Marie Cumberbatch, her arms around her granddaughter, *little Lovy*, and with Cyril James Cumberbatch on the right, in a formal dark three-piece suit with a pocket watch chain.

It was on the south side of Kandilli point, on the high ground along the Kandilli Vaniköy road that our house stood, known as the Cumberbatch villa, Mother called it "*La Maisonette*" (the little house). The villa belonged to Cyril James Cumberbatch, who was born in Smyrna in 1873. He died in Istanbul in 1944 as a retired official from the British Consulate. To the rear of this villa, was a garden on terraces with pistachio trees, very ordered with valuable slabs laid out. This was the location where garden parties were given by the Cumberbatches.

This building was destroyed when the Vaniköy-Küçüksu road was opened up. Set on the high ground within the enclosed park, was the "The Big House", a house described as a chateau, a finely worked construction with a red roof and a panoramic Bosphorus view where many private parties and meetings took place.



Kandilli *(continued)*



▲ The Cumberbatch mansion, circa 1940. Known as “La Maisonette”, it had its own beachfront and boathouse. Set on the high ground within the enclosed park, was the “Big House”, described as a chateau, with panoramic views of the Bosphorus.



Marie and Cyril James Cumberbatch
with “Little Lovy” in the garden of
“La Maisonette”, Kandilli, August 1941. ►

Departure for Stockholm



- ◀ Monday, September 20, 1943. At Keleti Station, 2 p.m., the last moment before boarding the train. Between her parents, little Lovice.



▲
September 20, 1943.
Antal Ullein-Reviczky leans out of the
railway carriage for one last word with
former Minister, Dezső Laky.



- ◀ Arrival in Stockholm, Thursday,
September 23, 1943. The train waited for
us in Malmö and we left for Stockholm
in a most luxurious train. We arrived
in Stockholm at 9.37 p.m. (after 10
hours on the train) and were met by
Count and Countess Gustav Bonde,
Prime Minister's Private Secretary,
whom we knew in Budapest, Legation
staff and reporters who photographed
us. We stayed at the Grand Hotel
Stockholm (from notes in Mrs. Antal
Ullein-Reviczky's diary).

Stockholm



September 30, 1943. The State Coach leaving the Royal Palace of Stockholm, where Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky presented his Letters of Credence to Sweden's Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, Duke of Västerbotten, and his spouse, Princess Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

September 30, 1943. ▶
Antal Ullein-Reviczky after
his royal audience.



November 26, 1943. Hungaro–Swedish Society’s Gala Dinner and Official Soirée following Antal Ullein-Reviczky’s speech.

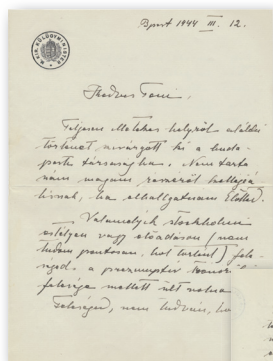


November 26, 1943. Hungaro–Swedish Society Gala where Antal Ullein-Reviczky made his first speech entirely in Swedish and was heartily applauded.

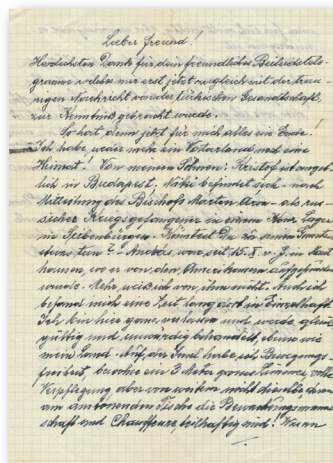
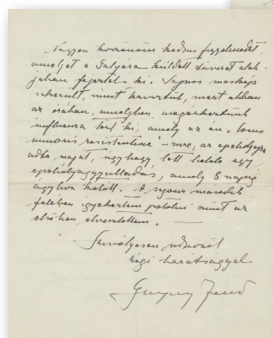
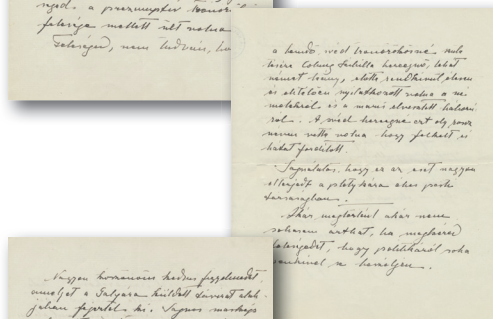
Antal Ullein-Reviczky with H.R.H. Prince Carl Johan of Sweden, Duke of Dalarna.



Stockholm (continued)



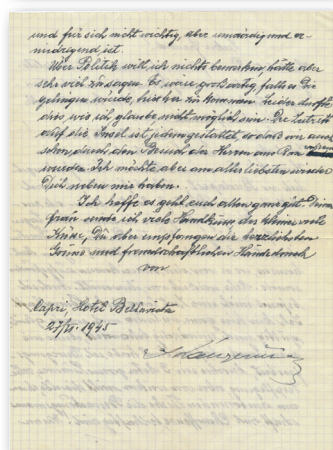
► Jenő Ghyczy de Ghicz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary until March 22, 1944. Ghyczy's handwritten letter dated March 12, 1944 (in Hungarian), to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Stockholm (see English translation on page 211).



June 27, 1945, Capri: Nicholas Kállay's letter to Antal Ullein-Reviczky, handwritten in German. Addressed by Kállay to "Sr. Exc. Anton Ullain (sic)-Reviczky, ung. Gesander, Stockholm", later added "Ungarska Legation".

Cover with censor's resealing tape said "OPENED BY EXAMINER 360 P.C. 90." and the date stamp was STOCKHOLM 11.9.45.

Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky notes in her diary on October 17, 1945: "I had a letter from Barthané (Mrs. Imre Bartha) from Stockholm and enclosed a closed letter from Capri from Prime Minister Kállay! His letter dates from June 27th." (see English translation on page 126). ►



March 20, 1944. ►
 Alarming news from Hungary. "At 5.55 p.m., phone rings ... cipher arrived 'Regent, Csatay, Szombathelyi, Ghyczy, have left for Hitler's headquarters—meanwhile the Nazis are occupying Hungary!' We are on the radio, trembling." The Art Deco glass clock on the radio, c. 1935 by Jaeger-LeCoultre, is today on Lovice Mária's desk at Kelecsény.



March 22, 1944. Antal Ullein-Reviczky at his desk in Stockholm, "Writing my declaration against the quislings". News of the new quisling government of extreme pro-Nazi Field-Marshal Döme Sztójay reached us at 9.40 p.m.



Stockholm (continued)



- ◀ March 22, 1944.
Antal Ullein-Reviczky
with photographs
of two Hungarian
Prime Ministers: “Two
Hungarian Prime
Ministers, victims of the
Germans, Paul Teleki and
Nicholas Kállay.”



- ◀ September 30, 1943.
Antal Ullein-Reviczky
and his spouse, Lovice
Louisa Grace, after the
royal audience with
Crown Prince Gustaf
Adolf and his spouse,
Princess Sibylla of Saxe-
Coburg and Gotha. Mrs.
Ullein-Reviczky wears
a traditional Hungarian
mantle known as a
“Szür” originally worn
by Magyar herdsmen in
Hungary as far back as
the Middle Ages.

October 1943. A family picture: the Ullein-
Reviczkys, Antal,
wife and daughter
photographed through
the glass lattice door
of the formal drawing-
room of the legation
at Strandvägen 57,
Stockholm. Photograph
taken by Ullein-
Reviczky's close associate,
Count Ferdinand Orsich
de Slavetich, known
to the family as "Pizek".





Portrait of Antal Ullein-Reviczky in *Díszmagyar*, or the official Hungarian Court Dress, Budapest, 1942.

Colourized gelatine silver print, the work of Károly Demeter (1892–1983), an eminent photographer and pioneer of the technique. Signed lower right: Demeter K.

“The orders, decorations and medals of Antal Ullein-Reviczky reflect a most eventful and meritorious career—the career of a soldier, diplomat, academic and statesman, who served his country faithfully throughout his entire life and who is therefore an example for today’s politicians and future generations. Most of Ullein-Reviczky’s foreign orders came from Hungary’s allies of the period: Germany, Italy, Bulgaria,

Croatia and Finland. He was the recipient of two Yugoslavian decorations and a Spanish order too. As a closing chapter to his diplomatic service in France, Ullein-Reviczky was awarded the title and insignia of a Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honour in June 1929. Although it was as the former second secretary of the legation that he received the high recognition, it should not be left unmentioned here that Ullein-Reviczky’s best known work in the field of international law, *La nature juridique des clauses territoriales du Traité de Trianon* was published in Paris in 1929 in French, and became an internationally recognized book. He was also a Knight of the Order of Malta. Considering his high and influential position, it is not surprising that he received honours from so many nations. Hungary’s key ally, Germany awarded the First Grade of the Order of the German Eagle to Ullein-Reviczky, a rather low grade, especially when compared to the decorations conferred on him by the other allies. The logical explanation is that Ullein-Reviczky’s anti-Nazi feelings and actions did not make him popular in Berlin. He too must have detested the Nazi insignia and got rid of it at one point, as it is the only decoration missing from his otherwise complete medal group today.”

Dr. Gergely Pál Sallay, Head of Department of the Hungarian Military History Museum and member of the Orders and Medals Research Society (OMRS)

Every image needs a caption, and it is through
 Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky’s reminiscences that
 these historical photographs have been brought to life.



TIMELINES

ANTAL ULLEIN-REVICZKY

- November 8, 1894: Antal Ullein-Reviczky born in Sopron, Hungary
- 1913–1919: Studies at Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, Austria
- Nov. 1919–Apr. 1920: Royal Hungarian Legation, Vienna, Austria
- 1921: Struggles for Plebiscite in Sopron, Hungary
- Feb. 1923–Feb. 1929: Royal Hungarian Legation, Paris, France
- 1924–1929: Attends the meetings of the League of Nations four times a year, Hungarian delegate to the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, Paris, France
- 1929 and 1936: *La nature juridique des clauses territoriales du Traité de Trianon* (two editions, Paris: Pedone)
- Mar. 1929–Aug. 1935: Head, Consular Section, Royal Hungarian Legation, Istanbul, Turkey
- Dec. 1929: Takes in marriage Lovice Louisa Grace Cumberbatch, daughter of Cyril James Cumberbatch, KCB (1873–1944), British Consul in Istanbul
- 1933: *Privatdozent*, Tisza István University, Debrecen, Hungary
- Aug. 1935–Dec. 1938: Head, Consulate of the Kingdom of Hungary, Zagreb, Yugoslavia
- Dec. 1938–Apr. 1941: Head, Press Department, Royal Hungarian Foreign Ministry
- Apr. 1941–Sept. 1943: Also Press Chief of Hungarian Prime Minister
- May 20, 1942: Receives title of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
- 1941: Titular professor, Tisza István University, Debrecen, Hungary
- Sept. 1943–Mar. 25, 1944: Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Royal Hungarian Legation, Stockholm, Sweden
- Mar. 25, 1944–July 1945: Representative of Free Hungary, Stockholm, Sweden
- July 1945–Oct. 1948: Istanbul, Turkey
- 1947: *Guerre allemande, paix russe. Le drame hongrois* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière)
- 1948: Head, Foreign Press Service, Hungarian National Council (New York)
- Oct. 1948–Sept. 1949: Geneva, Switzerland
- Sept. 1949–Jan. 1950: Paris, France
- Jan. 1950–June 1955: London, UK
- June 1950: Representative in London, UK, of the Hungarian National Council
- June 13, 1955: Died in London

CENTRAL-EUROPEAN HISTORY 1914–1945

July 28, 1914: World War I begins
Nov. 11, 1918: Armistice on Western Front
Jan. 18, 1919–Jan. 21, 1920: Paris Peace Conference
Mar. 1, 1920–Oct. 15, 1944: Adm. Miklós Horthy Regent of Hungary
June 4, 1920: Treaty of Trianon signed by Hungary
Jan. 30, 1933: Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany
July 17–18, 1936: Outbreak of Spanish Civil War
Oct. 14, 1933: Germany leaves League of Nations
Mar. 15, 1935: Hitler repudiates military sanctions of Versailles Treaty
Nov. 1, 1936: Benito Mussolini proclaims Berlin-Rome axis
Feb. 4, 1938: Joachim von Ribbentrop Foreign Minister of Germany
Mar. 13, 1938: Anschluß: Austria declared part of Germany
Sept. 29, 1938: Munich conference: transfer of Sudetenland to Germany
Nov. 1, 1938: First Vienna Award: Southern Slovakia returned to Hungary
Aug. 23, 1939: German-Soviet non-aggression pact signed
Sept. 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland: World War II begins
May 10, 1940: Neville Chamberlain replaced by Winston Churchill as British Prime Minister
Aug. 30, 1940: Second Vienna Award: Northern Transylvania returned to Hungary
Apr. 3, 1941: Hungarian Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki commits suicide
Aug. 11, 1941: Atlantic Charter signed by F. D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill
Mar. 9, 1942–Mar. 22, 1944: Miklós Kállay Prime Minister of Hungary
Feb. 2, 1943: German surrender at Stalingrad
July 26, 1943: Mussolini forced to resign, Badoglio government
Nov. 28–Dec. 1, 1943: Tehran Conference of ‘Big Three’ (Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin)
Mar. 19, 1944: German occupation of Hungary
Mar. 19, 1944: Adol Eichmann arrives in Hungary
May 15–July 8, 1944: The Holocaust in Hungary
Oct. 15, 1944: Arrow-Cross take-over in Hungary: Regent Horthy taken prisoner by Nazis
Feb. 4–11, 1945: Yalta Conference of ‘Big Three’
Feb. 13, 1945: Fall of Budapest to the Soviet Troops
April 30, 1945: Hitler commits suicide in Berlin
May 8, 1945: Germany surrenders: Victory in Europe (VE day)
Aug. 6–9, 1945: Atomic Bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan
Aug. 14, 1945: Surrender of Japan (VJ day)—World War II ends



GERMAN WAR—RUSSIAN PEACE

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION

No one is more qualified to trace the political history of Hungary in the disastrous years of 1938 to 1944 than Antal Ullein-Reviczky. The author, who was both witness and participant of the tragedy that put an end to old Hungary, wanted to convey both the motives behind the largely unknown efforts to stave off disaster and the role he himself played in these efforts.

Antal Ullein-Reviczky is a distinguished jurist, a shrewd diplomat, a patriot whose loyalty to his country is beyond question, and finally, he is a man of good faith, which is essential in a historian. After finishing his studies in Vienna at the Diplomatic Academy, founded by Maria Theresa for the training of diplomats and consuls of the Danubian Monarchy, he entered the foreign service in 1919, after the fall of Béla Kun.¹ At the time it was impossible for a young Hungarian jurist and diplomat not to be revisionist, for the Treaty of Trianon, in many respects unjust, had driven the country to despair and deeply wounded the Hungarian soul. Ullein-Reviczky initiated a press campaign and caused the first territorial revision of the Treaty of Trianon.² As a result of the Sopron plebiscite, which took place in December of 1921, the town of Sopron, of which Ullein-Reviczky is a native son, was returned to Hungary in spite of the forceful counter-propaganda organized by the Austrians who at that point were already favouring the Germans.

Named Secretary of the Legation in Paris, Ullein-Reviczky also participated in the work of the S.d.N.³ as secretary of the Magyar delegations. He served in Turkey from 1929 to 1935, after which he was appointed consul to Zagreb (1935–1938), which, for a Hungarian during this period, was no sinecure.

Ullein-Reviczky was able to pursue his academic career while fulfilling his function as a diplomat. Doctor of Law at the University of Debrecen, he was named privat docent in 1933 and published widely in his own country, as well as in France and Turkey, including many studies dealing with international and Hungarian constitutional law. His best-known work from this period is *La nature juridique des clauses territoriales du Traité de Trianon*.⁴

The Second World War led Ullein-Reviczky into the realm of active politics. When in February of 1939 Regent Horthy conferred upon Count Pál Teleki the awesome task of leading his country at an especially perilous period in its history, the newly appointed Prime Minister named the author of this book Chief of the Press Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A prisoner of the errors committed by his predecessors and paralyzed by the political system in place, Teleki fought desperately to safeguard his country's political independence until the day when, no longer able to keep the country out of the conflict, the elderly statesman committed suicide to save by the sacrifice of his life the honour of his homeland. One cannot read without emotion the pages Ullein-Reviczky devotes to the noble Pál Teleki and his heroic but vain efforts.

His successors were even less suited to carry out what Teleki failed to achieve. Bárdossy did not have the strength of character to resist the Germans the way Prime Minister Kállay attempted to do, though too late. The men in power did not have a clear vision of the future; nor did they understand, as Ullein-Reviczky urged, that by bringing down the government they might save the state. True, the lack of understanding on the part of the Allies, after the rupture with Britain and the United States, only served to strengthen the link with Germany.

After the departure of Bárdossy, Ullein-Reviczky became the right-hand man of Prime Minister Kállay, who, beginning in May 1942, tried to free Hungary from the grip of Germany and revive the sober political approach of Teleki. Kállay courageously threw himself into this superhuman though illusory endeavour, conducting a subtle policy described in detail in this book. Yet Kállay, whose anti-German attitude and activities are highlighted by his former adviser, made the mistake of basing his policy on the prediction that Anglo-Saxon forces would liberate his country. However, it was not up to Hungary to choose its conqueror. On the contrary—and this Kállay learned too late—the Great Powers agreed in Tehran in November of 1943 to place Eastern Europe in the Red Army's sphere of operation,

which would completely change the political position of the Danubian and Balkan countries.

Although they declared war on the Soviets on June 25, 1941, the Magyars fought with moderation, and as time passed and German reverses mounted, the government in Budapest cut back on its participation, going so far as to demand, on March 14, 1944, the recall of Hungarian troops from the Eastern Front. A disastrous move! Four days later Germany entered Hungary, handing power over to General Sztójay. This was the beginning of the Hungarian tragedy.

At this time Ullein-Reviczky was no longer in Budapest where he could not have escaped the Germans. Indeed, for more than a year, they had been complaining about the Hungarian Chief of Press and had been demanding that Kállay dismiss him, because of his “consistently unfriendly attitude toward the Axis”. Hitler himself had described Ullein-Reviczky as “the *evil genius* of the Hungarian government”.

Thus, the Prime Minister sent Ullein-Reviczky to Stockholm, charging him in his capacity as Minister with the task of bringing to a successful conclusion the negotiations begun with the Allies at the beginning of 1943, aimed at Hungarian withdrawal from the war. The author relates these secret negotiations in detail. After the Germans occupied his country on March 19, 1944, Ullein-Reviczky rebelled against the government, refusing to recognize Sztójay’s anti-constitutional regime, imposed on Hungary by the Nazis in the absence of Admiral Horthy. From Stockholm, the former Minister remained in touch with the Regent until October 15, 1944, the day the Magyar Head of State was arrested and taken away by the Germans after he announced on radio that Hungary had asked for an armistice from the Russians who had already encircled Budapest.

Henceforth the history of Hungary of old came to a close. Ullein-Reviczky, who had served Hungary loyally, also ends his book with this chapter. The new Hungary, born of defeat, has broken with a past for which the author of this book feels less than pure affection. As far as his attitude towards the current régime of his country is concerned, it does not in any way diminish the considerable value of his first-hand account of an era.

May the Hungarian people, after all the suffering they have endured, awaken soon to a fair and happy new national life.

S. Stelling-Michaud



FOREWORD TO THE ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION BY THE AUTHOR

The Hungarian tragedy described in the pages of this work is not only a tragedy for Hungary, but for all the small countries of Central and Eastern Europe. For despite their diverse political composition and distinct ethnic character, despite their divergent, often conflicting aspirations, there is also an interdependence between these countries, which creates a kind of solidarity. This is worth taking into account when considering their history. Yet it is often the solidarity of the weak in the presence of the powerful; a solidarity, which is manifest even when those involved are not aware of it. Nevertheless, enlightened by their own experience, they must in time yield to the evidence. Indeed, it is not difficult to notice that the Great Powers, whether or not they are united, always follow their own policies, and if they show any interest at all in any of their small neighbours, it is usually because the voluntary or obligatory support displayed by the latter for one camp or another serves their interests. The Great Powers are rarely concerned about the one real interest of the small nations, which is to be left alone, in peace—especially when the Great Powers in question are Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Having been placed by fate between these two colossi, the small countries of Central and Eastern Europe, whatever their politics, inevitably suffered the repercussions of Russian-German relations. They were bargaining chips even when these relations were good, and they became strategic areas, resources to be exploited the moment a conflict pitted one large empire against another, and they learned to switch camps, fight under different flags as the fortunes of war would have it. The position these countries occupy today is a direct consequence of the Russian victory. In the event of a victory other than Russian, their situation would be quite different, but still similar in many ways.

If I endeavour in what follows to relate what happened to Hungary during these last turbulent years; if I attempt to examine the basic motivation behind Hungarian policy, and if I reveal with regard to Hungary the inevitable consequences of the general upheaval, I shall treat a subject

which, whether I like it or not, presents a concise overview of the entire European drama.

The reader may wish to contemplate what is said about Hungary here from this point of view.



The twenty years following the First World War allowed my country to dress, indeed almost heal, the wounds caused by the first worldwide conflagration. Its fertile soil, its flourishing industries, sufficed to assure economic independence, just as the deep patriotism of its people, dedicated to liberty and truly fond of their country's ancestral constitution, guaranteed its political independence.

Like countries elsewhere, Hungary had its external and internal problems, which were not always easy to resolve, but the obstacles standing in its way did not appear insurmountable. Inside the country, people aspired to a fairer division of the country's rich resources and wider participation in public affairs, while in its external relations the nation desired fairer borders than those decreed by the Treaty of Trianon. These borders have been "decided somewhat arbitrarily", as Aristide Briand admitted, and consequently "are not absolutely ineradicable".* It was not very surprising to see all of Hungary sharing the same opinion. Yet none of these questions necessarily implied a violent solution—internal revolution or external war. Hungarian political life offered plenty of constitutional opportunities to discuss and in due course resolve important problems to the satisfaction of the majority; thus none of the political parties advocated violence except for the Hungarian Nazi extremists, whose numbers were in any case insignificant.

In the domain of foreign policy, no Hungarian government between the world wars departed from this practice of orderly conduct—more than one revision has been carried out peacefully in history! And never, not for a moment, was war envisaged as a means of attaining national objectives.

* Aristide Briand pronounced these words in his capacity as French Minister of Foreign Affairs, during debates over the ratification of the Treaty of Trianon in the French Chamber of Deputies. See *Journal Officiel*, 1921 (Chambre), p. 2591.

“We do not intend to separate peace from justice” I noted in 1935 in the conclusion of my book on the territorial clauses of the Treaty of Trianon. “We desire both, and we certainly do not want war. In fact, we abhor it and shall miss no opportunity to affirm this. If there is one thing that any state has the right to insist on, it is that when it declares that it rejects recourse to war, it should be believed.”**

Hungary, then, did not want war, all the less since it had obtained all the territorial modifications which could reasonably be claimed, partly before the outbreak of the Second World War (1st Vienna Award, November 1938, reoccupation of Ruthenia and the transfer of the Hungarian-Slovak border, March 1939), and still without being a warring party, the 2nd Vienna Award in August 1940.*** From the moment Hungary, yielding to German pressure, took an active part in the war, it was not rewarded with any increase in territory. Moreover, after the German-Russian declaration of war in June 1941, its first concern was to announce that it had no interest in territorial gain.

Having achieved its revisionist aspirations without war, what possible interest could Hungary have had in participating in the carnage? Obviously none. On the contrary, it had every reason to stay out of the war and wait patiently for the conflict to end. Such an attitude would have been all the more advisable as the Allied Powers, whose victory was foreseeable despite the predominance of the Axis in Europe, insisted on only one thing, and that was not that Hungary not be allowed to profit from the war, but that it not take part on the side of the Axis.

Hungary ended up participating in the war as an ally of Germany, and having done this, it lost all the territorial gains acquired through diplomacy. Furthermore, it induced its own devastation to such an extent that this country, rich and happy at the beginning of the war, is at present but a pile of ruins, devastated, disfigured, and bled dry. How did all this come about?

** La nature juridique des clauses territoriales du Traité de Trianon, op. cit.

*** The reoccupation of Bácska and Baranya, carried out with Germany after the latter's attack on Yugoslavia, will be dealt with separately in what follows.

This is what I shall try to set out here, based on my own recollections. I apologize in advance if this account is incomplete. The reason for it, more than any lapse of memory, is that I find myself far from any archives, reduced to using personal notes jotted down over the course of my active service, as well as the few documents I managed to save.



PART ONE

COMMENTARY ON THE POLITICAL EVENTS PRECEDING HUNGARY'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR

THE FIRST VIENNA AWARD

The first political event of general interest that altered the European status quo and directed world attention to Hungary was the arbitral decision reached in Vienna on November 2, 1938, as a result of which Hungary regained part of its territories ceded to Czechoslovakia after the First World War. This event, as well as the circumstances preceding it and its numerous consequences, deserves detailed examination. In undertaking this examination, we are perfectly aware that our task is thankless, as it is always perilous to dispel misconceptions and myths. Yet the Vienna Awards, the first no less than the second, are wrapped in legend. The assumption of a reward handed to Hungary for its contribution to Germany's war effort became an article of faith conceived and propagated by those who had accounts to settle with the Hungarian State or its pre-war government. In this matter a few foreign voices offer noble competition to certain Hungarian politicians who strive to establish their authority in the country at the price of endorsing the wrongs attributed to their native land.

The truth—and by now the very dates of the two Awards make it amply clear—is slightly different. However, before moving on to the facts, let us take a look at the atmosphere surrounding these events and the motivations and actions that led Hungary first to Munich and then to Vienna.

It has already been noted that since the borders of post-Trianon Hungary had been, to say the least, “*decided somewhat arbitrarily*” by the Peace Conference, all Hungarians, inspired by national feeling, were united in their desire to return these borders to ethnic lines more in accordance

with the principles of justice. There is nothing surprising in this, for if in a nation of almost eleven million people, three and a half million suddenly find themselves outside the national borders, it is to be expected that that nation will try everything in its power to be reunited with the compatriots separated from them against their will. Throughout history it has always been like this; revisionism was not a Hungarian invention, and certainly not that of so-called “reactionaries”. The government of the first Hungarian Republic, “*Popular*” in name, was the first to fight against the breakup of the country, and it is exactly due to the fruitless outcome of this struggle that it yielded in desperation to the communist rule of Béla Kun. Regarding the latter, he did not delay in assembling a Red Army, which he used to purge northern Hungary of its Czechoslovak inhabitants.

Moreover, in its pursuit of revisionist politics, Hungary could even rely on the encouragement of the opposite camp. Did not Thomas Masaryk,¹ president of Czechoslovakia write that the ethnographic borders born of the “exhilaration of war” were in certain cases only a “*provisional arrangement, transitory in nature*”, but later, as soon as nations have calmed down and accepted the principle of self-determination, it will be possible to complete without serious emotional traumas and on the basis of objective criteria “*adjustments of the ethnographic borders according to the needs of the minorities*”.² What seemed so reasonable to the president of Czechoslovakia should have been accepted without reluctance by the Czechoslovak people—and let us add the Romanian people—if only we had for once allowed these people to be guided by their natural common sense. Such was the opinion of the famous publicist, Robert William Seton-Watson³ who, as we know, was the most devoted friend of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In his study *Treaty Revision and the Hungarian Frontiers*,⁴ he puts forth the thesis that although the reestablishment of the former Hungarian borders of 1914 is unacceptable, one could very well consider returning to Hungary “*those borderlands where the majority of the population is Magyar*”.⁵ The author notes further: “*I never met a Czech or a Romanian of the Regat who would not gladly hand over a few towns and villages if it really meant the end of the quarrel.*”⁶

This being the case, it is not surprising that all Hungary avidly awaited the first favourable opportunity to recover those “few towns and villages” and was not at all convinced that it was a sacrilege to contest the inviolability of Czechoslovak and Romanian territories. And the Magyar population of

these countries who, without committing a single act of revolt wished to be reunited with their ethnic brethren, did not yet know at this moment, and would learn later at the price of much suffering, that their duty was not only to rein in this desire, considered at the time perfectly legitimate, but in addition, they would have to rise up in defence of masters they have not chosen, against true brothers they never renounced.

The fact remains that when Hitler, during the first official visit of the Regent of Hungary to Germany in the summer of 1938, proposed to his guest to wage war together against Czechoslovakia, Admiral Horthy's response was a categorical "No", even though the re-annexation of the whole of Slovakia would have been the reward for military alliance with the Reich. Admiral Horthy went even further: at the request of some of the more perceptive generals of the German High Command, he attempted to dissuade Hitler from embarking on his militant adventure, which only led to ill will, since the Führer lost his temper and the generals quietly withdrew.

Nevertheless, since in the autumn of that year the process of disintegration of Czechoslovakia had begun, and since Germany had secured its share at Munich, and Poland was preparing to move its army into regions it claimed for itself, Hungary believed it could remind the world that it, too, expected rectification of the borders "decided somewhat arbitrarily". Czechoslovakia by now was a "national" state in name only. When, in accordance with President Beneš's⁷ recommendation, the Peace Conference *destroyed Austria-Hungary*, and having *liberated* the nationalities within its borders and formed a state dubbed *national*, Czechoslovakia, without mentioning the difference between Czechs and Slovaks, gained three and a half million Germans, seven hundred thousand Magyars, one hundred thousand Poles and around four hundred and fifty thousand Ruthenes—a heavy load for a state whose population barely exceeded 13 million. Therefore, had the principle of nationalities been for once applied to the detriment of Czechoslovakia, there would have been no need to get excited. In any case, the presence in Munich of the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France would have been enough to ease the moral scruples of any European government.

Moreover, if Czechoslovakia was carved up at the height of Hitler's power, it was no less so after the complete removal of the cause of the problem. Because scarcely liberated, it ceded, and this time voluntarily,

it seems, an entire province, Ruthenia, also known as Carpatho-Ukraine, to its powerful neighbour, Soviet Russia. If, in his report submitted to the Czechoslovak parliament on October 30, 1945, Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger⁸ truly expresses his belief that the transfer of territory was “*an example of a friendly solution of problems of this sort*”, then his statement contradicts the impression he tried to give, which was that the intransigence of Czechoslovakia concerning territorial questions cannot be subjected to exceptions. It would therefore be wrong to exaggerate unduly the territorial amputations inflicted on Czechoslovakia in 1938, because the wrongdoing definitely lies elsewhere. The responsibility for the amputations can only be attributed to Hitler’s unbridled passion for world domination, and the famous country of the Sudetes was but a step on this path. However at this time, Hitler’s diplomacy still adhered to certain conventional principles. Thus, the watchword was “liberation” of the Sudetes and not their use as a simple springboard for the next move. Had one been able to predict the future, perhaps Hungarian diplomacy would have been less eager to claim its share, but each action must be judged considering the circumstances of the moment, and not in the light of future developments that are known only to God. Besides, if Hungary was duped by Hitler concerning the honesty of his intentions, then Poland, having taken part in the division, was similarly deceived, unless someone succeeds in convincing us that it is less appropriate to accept territory from the hands of the arbitrator, put forward, supposedly, by the opposite party, than to occupy the coveted region *manu militari*. Finally, if both Hungary and Poland were duped, then what can be said of Great Britain and France—countries that went well beyond satisfying a few ancient territorial claims in return for Hitler’s cooperation? They abandoned a former ally to enable Hitler to have his fill of the ally’s territory! Let us hasten to add that their intentions were noble: they had hoped to save peace by forfeiting Czech lands, but while recognizing this, it is difficult to claim that only Germany would have benefited from the agreement.

Such were the circumstances when Kálmán Kánya,⁹ Hungarian Foreign Minister, sent his chief of staff, Count Csáky¹⁰ to Munich to attempt to persuade the Big Four¹¹ to discuss the Hungarian question as well. Count Csáky was rather badly received by the Germans because Ribbentrop,¹² the German foreign minister detested his Hungarian colleague who,

being considerably older and more experienced than Ribbentrop, a mere novice in diplomacy, rarely missed an opportunity to rub this in. Besides, Ribbentrop did not appreciate being lectured, especially by a diplomat from a small country, which Germany was already preparing to integrate into its *Lebensraum* (living space). Thus, there was little to hope for there. Besides neither was the Führer himself particularly well disposed towards Hungary. He bore a grudge against the Regent and especially against Kánya, the Regent's close political adviser, for having refused a few months earlier his friendly offer to wage war against Czechoslovakia. Under these circumstances, the envoy of the Hungarian foreign minister, far from succeeding in gaining access to the Führer's office, was not even able to approach Ribbentrop, who let it be known that he was just too busy then. Not wanting to return empty-handed, the zealous young diplomat recalled that Mussolini¹³ had, for some time, paid special attention to him. Had he not taken him only the previous year to Libya on an airplane that he had piloted himself? So Count Csáky decided to enlist the help of the Duce to cajole the Führer. He immediately called upon Count Galeazzo Ciano,¹⁴ at the Hotel Regina, and explained the purpose of his mission. The two counts did not particularly like each other, but business being business, Ciano before long did lead Csáky into his father-in-law's office. For a shrewd politician like Mussolini, proving his friendship towards Hungary one more time was an opportunity not to be missed. The Italian head of state acted quickly and effectively—insofar as that the Four Great Powers became aware of the Hungarian question; the solution, however, was referred to the two parties involved (Hungary and Czechoslovakia). Nevertheless, in case the two parties failed to agree, a possibility they could not exclude, they consented to dealing with the question themselves.

The meeting in Munich thus came to a close, not without having laid down the principles of an Anglo-German naval treaty, though Hitler had still not compensated Hungary, certainly not for its contribution to a war that had just been avoided.

But soon enough, the Hungarian and Czechoslovak delegations met at the conference table to discuss the two countries' borders, though as expected, they were unable to reach an agreement. Perhaps the Hungarian delegates, Kánya and Count Teleki, were too demanding and their Czechoslovak partner, who was none other than Monsignor Jozef Tiso,¹⁵

too ungenerous. Still, neither believed that they could accept responsibility for an arrangement that would call for sacrifice on both sides, for that would have been fiercely contested by the public opinion of both countries. It was at this moment that arbitration was accepted—the Czechoslovak delegation having rejected the Hungarian proposal to hold a plebiscite in the disputed territories. The Czechoslovak delegation suggested Mussolini and Hitler as arbitrators. Monsignor Tiso surely knew why he preferred the two dictators to the Four Great Powers of Munich, but in the atmosphere of the time, this choice did not provoke an uproar. The Hungarian government did not therefore withhold its consent, which later proved to be a mistake. Obviously, governing requires foresight; to really excel in this art, the Hungarian government should have foreseen that ten months later, Hitler would trigger a world war, and in the third year of this war he would succeed in dragging Hungary into it. Moreover, in this war he would commit a series of unspeakable atrocities, and in the end he would be vanquished and go down in history as War Criminal Number One. From all this the Hungarian government would have been able to conclude without difficulty that there would be no advantage in putting its case in the hands of the German Führer and of his future Italian accomplice, since by doing so, it would run the risk of retaining nothing of what it might eventually receive. *Eventually*, for prior to the arbitration ruling, parties are generally uncertain about the verdict. And the Hungarian government all the less so, because, as we have seen, it was not in the good graces of the German dictator. The latest reports concerning Hitler's frame of mind came from Ciano who warned his Hungarian colleague that the Führer was not in favour of a four-party arbitration, because in such a case the English and French arbitrators were inclined to support Czechoslovakia and he would be compelled to back the Hungarian cause, *which he would do with great reluctance*.

It was under these circumstances that the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by Count Pál Teleki, then minister of education, went to Vienna to acquaint himself with the arbitral decision reached by Ribbentrop and Ciano on November 2, 1938, a decision which would return to Hungary a strip of territory along the border, inhabited by about a million people, the great majority Hungarian speakers. The Hungarian public greeted this decision with satisfaction, although in extreme nationalist circles critical voices could also be heard. But at the end of the

day, even those critics congratulated themselves and were grateful to the government that it had been able to accomplish the return of territory to Hungary that was so dear to it without resorting to war. One was naturally grateful to the two powers responsible for the arbitration, especially to Italy, but since the principal reason for public approval was the fact that war had been averted, people will have naturally not felt an obligation to follow the two fascist governments down the path of war if in the future they would wish to engage in one.

Meanwhile, the transfer of territory was accomplished without conflict, and diplomatic relations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia were no worse than before. Things would have returned to normal had not Hitler, in an act of folly, been possessed of the unfortunate idea, four and a half months later, to liquidate all of Czechoslovakia. The Prague coup, or more precisely the inaction of the Allies, conferred on the Czech people the nimbus of martyrdom which resulted in a tendency to characterize as an act of sacrilege all the diplomatic humiliations heaped on this country. Czechoslovakia understandably has benefited from this state of mind, and let us concede that this was fair enough.

We noted above that those who criticized the Hungarian government for their policy resulting in the Vienna arbitration came from the right. They reproached the government for having in effect achieved a semi-success only. The Vienna arbitration, they explained, served to exasperate the Führer; he was irritated with Hungary for not wanting to back him up in his projected war against Czechoslovakia. After all, what had been gained by the arbitration? It is obvious, those on the right reasoned, that once one accepts the principle of ethnographic borders, no other prestigious assembly would have been able to award Hungary less than what it received in Vienna; while as an ally of Germany, Hungary would have been able to recoup, at least regarding Czechoslovakia, its thousand-year-old possessions. The moral lesson to be drawn from this seemed to be that it is never too late to do well: all one has to do in the future is be more accommodating vis-à-vis Hitler and compensation will not be long in coming. In this way the arbitration in Vienna became in a roundabout manner one of the favourite arguments of German propaganda, not because Hitler for once might have been too generous with Hungary, but because he was not generous enough. In time, this line of argument won a number of converts in Hungary,

especially in the army, expansionist by nature. On the other hand, the calm and sober portion of the population did not get overexcited so quickly, if at all. Indeed, it was not without anxiety that they observed the conduct of a powerful neighbour.

The immense German Reich, having swallowed Austria, already stood arrogant and menacing at Hungary's frontiers, and even beyond. Germany was in effect on its way to establishing itself in Hungary. Not yet officially, of course, but the fact that with each passing day Germans were successfully occupying important positions made it increasingly clear that it was going to be well-nigh impossible to dislodge them. Indeed, the conquest of Hungary, consummated by the putsch of March 19, 1944, had already started at this time, the only difference being that instead of using panzers, the Germans backed up their actions with more appropriate weapons: declarations of unconditional friendship and fabulous promises.

Under the circumstances, Hungarian diplomacy, which was under no illusions and therefore acknowledged reality, the most compelling by far being that of Germany, could not avoid reckoning in all its calculations with the German presence on its borders and, as we have noted earlier, inside the country as well. This game was dangerous and the final result proves that it was not well managed. Nevertheless, as Hungary, like other countries, ended up like a feather buffeted in a whirlwind of colossal forces, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that in the end it was these forces rather than the well or poorly played cards of Hungarian diplomacy that determined the fate of the country. Even if Hungary had been as heroic as Poland, as tenacious as Greece, as bold as Yugoslavia or as clever as Czechoslovakia, its situation would not in the end be noticeably different from what it is today, because a small country, buffeted by worldwide upheavals, hardly makes history—it is merely subjected to it.

THE REOCCUPATION OF RUTHENIA AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN–SLOVAK BORDER

We noted already that Hungarian diplomacy had done its best to adapt to the German politics of the period. After the first success—as the outcome was then called—won at Vienna, the liquidation of Czechoslovakia, in March 1939, offered Hungary a new opportunity to rectify the contested borders of Trianon.

Hitler's blow, which knocked out Czechoslovakia, meant a change of neighbour for Hungary; instead of the state of Czechoslovakia, Hungary now found itself face to face with Slovakia, the Reich's premier satellite. This situation suddenly pushed to the fore the question of Ruthenia, which, in consideration of German opposition, Hungary had been unable to resolve during the first arbitration in Vienna.

Ruthenia, or as it is known today, Carpatho-Ukraine, extends, or rather extended, along the east salient of Czechoslovakia, and the great majority of its population was of Ruthene origin and Ruthene-speaking. Here we need not consider in detail what it means to be “Ruthene”—even linguists better qualified than ourselves are not all in agreement. Let us try to stick to essentials: the Ruthenes, though they are Slavs, are neither Czechs nor Slovaks. And they are definitely not Magyars. Just the same, one thousand years in the heart of the kingdom of St. Stephen has apparently done them no harm, given that when the victorious Great Powers decided to “liberate” them after the First World War, they discovered that their ethnic character, language and religion had remained intact. The victors thus handed them over to Czechoslovakia, albeit not without constraints. In the Treaty signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10, 1919, the principle Allied powers and their associates forced Czechoslovakia to accept the obligation to organize this province “*as an autonomous unit*” (Part II, Article 10) to be endowed with an “*autonomous diet as well as a government [...] responsible to the Ruthene diet*” (Article 11). Nothing of the sort was done. In noting this, we do not at all wish to voice a belated reproach to Czechoslovakia on the subject of this territory, which right now belongs neither to Czechoslovakia nor to Hungary. Our aim rather is to point out the fact that the right of sovereignty that Czechoslovakia had over the “autonomous” province of the Ruthenes was not incontestable and, especially from the point of view of

the country conceding it, to whom the Allied Powers had promised at the signing of the Peace Treaty (*Lettre d'envoi*) that the autonomy with which this territory would be endowed would allow the population detached from Hungary “*to let their desire be known publicly*”.

We have noted above that when Czechoslovakia was dismembered, the question of Ruthenia surfaced. The Hungarian government, led at this point by Count Pál Teleki, had good reason to raise the issue, or else the province would have been annexed either to Slovakia, vassal of Germany, or transformed into a sham of a state under Nazi domination. This second prospect seemed more alarming, for already during the period between Munich and the Prague coup, the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia in Ruthenia was more nominal than real. A priest named Volosin,¹⁶ on the German payroll, ran the state and influenced the so-called Ukrainian soldiers who had actually been recruited by the Germans. This was also the time that the Germans renamed this little province “Carpatho-Ukraine”. Naturally, they knew exactly what they were doing, and now, rather belatedly, we do too. Even before conquering Czechoslovakia, they already had their sights set on Poland; so the creation of a Germano-Ukrainian stronghold on the border of their future victim was no trivial diversion.

All this, as we have seen, was not yet clear. However from the point of view of the Hungarian government, what did seem obvious was that it was not in its interest to have this or that foreign entity plant itself between Hungary and Poland, preventing by its very existence the establishment of a common border between two friendly countries, a border desired earnestly by both of them. Thus the Hungarian government made it known to Berlin that under the circumstances it decided to return the Ruthene territory to its one thousand year-old homeland. It must be emphasized that psychologically speaking the moment was not badly chosen, since the Germans could not ignore the fact that by their brutal action in Bohemia, they had again strained the world's patience to the limit and therefore this was not a propitious moment for complications with Hungary, or to provoke the suspicions of Poland, which would inevitably have happened had the Germans insisted on holding on to their base in Ruthenia. Therefore they thought it more prudent to show some flexibility, from

which Hungary was quick to benefit by employing the soldiers it had on hand—young recruits who had been serving just six weeks—to reoccupy the coveted province. However, the action did not take place without bloodletting as the Ukrainian guards, known as Sitches, did not think they had been recruited and trained by the Germans only to give themselves up to the Hungarians. Nevertheless, after about ten days of more or less serious fighting, the first detachment of Hungarians reached the Polish border to fall into the waiting arms of representatives of the Polish army. The affair ended with banquets, embraces, and congratulations reinforcing considerably the standing of the Teleki government both in Hungary and abroad—except for Germany, of course.

Hungary thereby regained possession of Ruthenia, but it was not satisfied with the border separating this country from Slovakia because an important railroad line leading to Poland ran just along the border on the Slovak side. Some detachments of border guards received orders to take possession of this railroad as well as a strip of territory to protect it. This was soon done, despite rather lively Slovak opposition.

The Hungarian attitude drew attention to the fact that no national border had ever existed between Ruthenia and Slovakia and any claim to the railroad in question could only be based on the boundaries of the administrative districts from the time of the Czechoslovak Republic. However, since it was now a question of establishing a border between two countries, this boundary no longer served a purpose, and Hungary could not be deprived of a railroad linking it to Poland.

We hasten to add that though history had earlier and has since recorded many a territorial expansion that was not based on more solid foundations, or carried out with more commendable intentions, this argument as well as the procedure that followed, left a great deal to be desired. But at this moment, what is essential is not to decide which of the two, Hungary or Slovakia was right, since at that moment there were many other concerns, and the object of the dispute, the railroad line belonged neither to one nor to the other; what matters here is for us to demonstrate that we had managed the third increase of Hungarian territory since Munich, while the compensation from Hitler for services claimed to have been rendered by Hungary had still not materialized.

GERMAN–HUNGARIAN RELATIONS UNDER THE IMRÉDY GOVERNMENT. THE ACCESSION OF COUNT PÁL TELEKI

In reality, German–Hungarian relations at this time were going from bad to worse. “From bad”—because, already during Imrédy’s¹⁷ tenure they were not at their most cordial. In fact it would not be inappropriate to note that the future champion of Nazism in Hungary was not an enthusiastic enough Nazi for the Germans as long as he was in power. Imrédy’s “Nazism” at that time manifested itself rather in repeated initiatives to gag the opposition, first within his own party, then in Parliament, so as to rule as master of his country.

Imrédy was too much of an upstart in politics to have a taste for subtle paradoxes; in large assemblies he preferred to speak in intriguing riddles, but faced with an audience that took his views for granted, or when surrounded by his own people, his own “movement”, he ostentatiously sported his crest, a creation of his own imagination, depicting what looked like a stag with a twisted neck in full flight. However, from there to prostrating himself before Hitler was a very big step, one which he was yet ready to take. Imrédy at this juncture was completely alone in opposing Germany; he knew how to avoid a military alliance with the Master of the Third Reich, and he observed the activities of ethnic Germans within the nation, the vaunted “*Volksdeutsche*”, with suspicion, and he even knew how to go to extremes in distancing himself from Nazi groups. Furthermore, he attached great value to the Anglo-Saxon point of view. So much so that he did not hesitate to explain in a sensational interview in the *Daily Telegraph* right before Munich, that he had no intention of waging war against Czechoslovakia. All this, of course, did not please the Germans; a glance at the Nazi press of the time would make it clear that Hungary was not exactly the darling of the Reich, and this despite the supposedly Germanophile leanings of its Prime Minister. It is only when Csáky, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed, in January of 1939 the famous “Anti-Comintern”¹⁸ pact that Goebbels’¹⁹ press condescended to pay Hungary a few compliments—compliments which proved to be rather troublesome since the Soviet Union, in order to discourage other states from following Hungary’s example, immediately suspended de facto diplomatic relations with Budapest, which, it should be pointed out, left Germany unmoved.

Things with the Germans took another turn for the worse when in the beginning of spring, Count Pál Teleki assumed the premiership after Imrédy's tragicomic fall from grace triggered by the discovery of a Jewish ancestor in his family tree. Teleki had all the qualities necessary to invoke the displeasure of the Nazis. He was an aristocratic Transylvanian with pronouncedly anti-German family roots; in addition, his mother, of Greek origin, held no affection for Germans, either. His education was old-school English and his habits and views were diametrically opposed to those of the Nazis. He was steeped in international culture. A man of science, Teleki was known and esteemed across Europe as a geographer. Although he had already been Prime Minister twice,²⁰ he had no political ambition and never wished to promote himself, making himself available only when called upon, and he hoped to return eventually to academic life. A true scholar, he enjoyed debates; his desire was to convince, not conquer. There was a fundamental decency about him; he abhorred the exploitation of the poor and the oppression of the weak. Above all else, he was a convinced pacifist; thus, war never entered into his calculations. He loved his people with all his heart; he dedicated his life to service, and the moment he became convinced that his death would be more valuable than his life, he did not hesitate to sacrifice it on the altar of national honour.

In conferring the premiership on Teleki just a few months before the general elections, the Regent, an old liberal at heart, attempted to strike a blow against the clique of politicians with fascist sympathies, who, ever since General Gömbös's²¹ rise to power, that is, for six years, had been claiming the leadership for themselves. The accession of Teleki was thus an attempt by the Regent to return the country as far as it was feasible to a state resembling the good old days under Count Bethlen,²² meaning that liberalism should reclaim its rightful place in internal affairs, while foreign policy, the previously cordial relations with the Anglo-Saxon world should be prudently reestablished. The composition of the cabinet, however, was to remain unchanged, with Csáky in charge of foreign affairs, but the Regent and his advisers, especially Count Bethlen, had enough confidence in the skill and authority of the new Prime Minister to hope for a favourable turn of events. Indeed it soon turned out that the pro-fascist members believed it inopportune to show open opposition to Teleki, or even to Count Csáky, although the latter could easily pass for a convinced Germanophile. Ultimately he was not, but he chose the role that suited him at the time,

and given the circumstances, Teleki thought it unwise to oppose his stand. His attitude was dictated by caution, because the change taking place in Hungary put the government of the Reich in a manifestly bad mood, and the first measures of the new Hungarian government, marked by the incorporation of Ruthenia and the shifting of the Hungarian border to the detriment of Slovakia were certain not to ease the apprehensions of the Nazis.

Hitler's Germany had a system of its own for airing its grievances; this included a variety of what could be called complete "symphonies" modified to fit the gravity of the offense and the importance of the delinquent. To set the scene for Teleki, a rather large orchestra was assembled, from bitter editorials in the press to discourteous remarks by Nazi potentates and their agents in Hungary, and openly hostile releases from the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (National socialist monthly), a sort of running gospel of Hitlerism. At the same time, the Slovak press was encouraged to give free rein to their hatred of Hungary, from which the new masters of Slovakia, accused of "Hungarophilia" by refugee Czechs in London, benefited greatly. Within Hungary, all the Nazi positions were reinforced, the Hungarian sympathizers were shaken and the Germans of the country, affiliated with organizations of the Reich, were placed on a state of alert. It was only during Teleki's official visit to Hitler (end of April–early May 1939) that the tune changed, returning to conventional phrases about German-Hungarian cooperation, but did not exclude however, an appropriate dose of salutary warnings regarding the fate of governments that disagreed with the Reich.

DIVERGENT TRENDS IN HUNGARIAN POLITICS. THE ELECTIONS OF JUNE 1939

Here are the conditions prevailing in June 1939 as the Hungarian government faced general elections that would prove to be a new test of strength between old constitutional Hungary and the partisans of "the new order". Of course those favouring democratic ideas joined forces against this "new order", however, the word democracy was never uttered, and for good reason.

Let us note first of all that in Hungary democracy was never a political programme. It is not that Hungarians have less affinity than others for the

social and political system commonly known as *democracy*, but they are simply less talented by nature than certain other people when it comes to adaptation or for pushing themselves forward in the world.

Yet each era has its main theme, its watchword that is supposed to lead to salvation. In politics, it is the proclamation of faith that counts and not faith itself, or good works, which count even less. One must *say* what one does rather than *do* what one says. These are international conventions, which one cannot neglect without serious consequences. It is one lesson that Hungarians were unable to learn. The Hungarian soul tends to retreat; perhaps this is a reversion to earlier oriental modes of conduct—the soul turns inward because the external world confuses it. Foreign affairs therefore have remained *foreign* in the true sense of the word. Hungarians found a place in Europe one thousand years ago, but they have yet to find their place in the world. So they have always behaved as they saw fit, doing things when it was convenient for them. Consequently, in the view of the rest of the world, they were almost never *up to date*.

Being up to date between the two world wars meant being either *democratic* or *fascist*. Hungary was neither, and it was not alone in being this way. We know of several other countries in Europe, which, while not fascist, were also not as democratic as Hungary, but they took great care to parade the colours of democracy, which gave them legitimacy. In singing the praises of democracy, they passed themselves off as democratic, the way in the Middle Ages one could pass for a devout Catholic by reciting the *Credo*. Once singled out for salvation, one was free to do in everyday life the opposite of what one had confessed to in words—no one cared any more. But not to have any faith at all was a grave error; one was excluded from both camps, which was the predicament Hungary found itself in.

Hungary was not fascist, simply because fascist organizations were repugnant to the character of its people, who are endowed with the natural common sense of those who work the soil. The average Hungarian loves the work of his choosing and expects to dispose of his legitimate earnings according to his desire. He does not like to be told that he is nothing and the community is everything. Nor does the average Hungarian like to be disciplined when he is not a soldier, or to be commanded rather than governed. For him the homeland is not a factory, even less a training ground, and the world is not a battlefield. Not everyone around is a friend,

and a stranger is not necessarily an enemy. He believes in God, but not in infallible doctrines. However, he sees no reason to exterminate those whose faith differs from his own. He is a patriot without chauvinism and a Christian without inciting pogroms. He sticks to his habits both in his private and public life. He likes to move at his own pace, which guarantees steady progress, free of obstacles. He prefers steady progress to ephemeral novelty. Finally, he likes to live his own life and not that of others. He is a man, not a machine.

It follows that to turn Hungary into a fascist state, the Germans had to occupy it, gag it and subject it to a reign of terror, which happened in March 1944. Indeed, fascism lasted only as long as the Germans remained in the country.

(Certain Hungarian laws still dating back to the constitutional era and sullied by fascist vice, especially the various laws against Jews—weak imitations of Nazi legislation—were not enough to qualify Hungary as fascist. Because these laws, only briefly on the books, were due to factors that, on the whole, belong in the chapter of the “presence of Germans on the borders and even inside the country”. Moreover, despite these harmful laws, other than a few isolated cases there was, until German occupation, no persecution of Jews in Hungary. It is only to be hoped that a new democratic Hungary will not be forced to adopt laws equally foreign to the nation, laws due to factors other than German pressure.)

We have noted that Hungary was not democratic either. This was not due to an aversion to democracy, nor opposition to the forces of democracy. Contrary to the fascist countries, Hungary did not pursue anti-democratic politics, either abroad or at home, making exception for the fact that the circumstances determining developments in Hungarian political life lead, at different stages of history, towards special objectives. Thus, in the past, the question of introducing an integral democratic system never arose, although Hungary did adopt many democratic institutions at a time when other countries (gathered though they were in democracy’s embrace) were still far from accepting democratic values. To mention just one example of an essential trait of democracy: control of the government by the people existed, at least in principle, since the establishment of the kingdom in the year 1000. Forms of absolutism were banished from the Hungarian constitutional system. It goes without saying, however, that according to

the feudal ideas of the time, until 1848 only nobles were entitled to exercise political rights.

Less fortunate than Western countries, situated at the crossroads of the sweeping tides of history, Hungary was reduced during those long centuries to the unrewarding role of defending its liberty and guarding its independence. Yet the university of life teaches us that where essential prerequisites are lacking, our efforts will initially aim at acquiring them, and only afterwards do we tackle other important problems. Indeed, from the beginning of the 16th century, when Hungary came to be dominated by a foreign dynasty, the first concern of Hungarians was to defend their liberties from the continual encroachment of their sovereigns, all the while battling tirelessly to defend their homes, and Western Christendom, against the formidable thrust of the Ottomans. About the Hungarians' heroic struggle, Michelet²³ wrote memorably: "When are we going to pay our debt to these blessed people, saviours of the West?"

At the end of the 17th century, Hungarian territory was liberated at long last. But this liberation, achieved at the price of torrents of Hungarian blood, hardly signified the end of the struggle, because the dynasty and cabinet of Vienna, having for a while freed itself of an external enemy and finding itself facing a weakened Hungarian population, resorted to an even harsher policy of oppression. Thus, the most important and bloodiest of the Hungarian uprisings, that of Ferenc Rákóczi,²⁴ the Prince of Transylvania, broke out *after* the liberation of the national territory. Under such circumstances, this whole period, during which Western countries underwent untrammelled development, was lost for Hungary.

(The Hungarian nation's secular struggle for liberty was a living reality; and its importance was not lessened by the fact that part of the nobility took up the struggle, their chief aim being, as always, the defence of their privileges, as well as the independence of their country. Nor did it detract from the value of the struggle that Emperor Joseph II²⁵ attempted to appeal to the people with social reforms, and while these reforms were generous he introduced them in order to rid himself more easily of the more obstreperous members of the nobility. However, given that at the same time he introduced *German* as the official language of the Empire, it was not difficult to guess the real purpose of the favours lavished on the people.)

In truth, despite all its travails, the Hungarian nation's senses were not dulled, and they responded with keen interest to the humanitarian

ideas emanating from the West as a result of the French Revolution. The progressive elements in Hungary adopted France as their model, and the ideas originating in France contributed to a flurry of reforms on such a scale that by 1848, that is, before any of the countries submitted to the Habsburgs, Hungary had a democratic parliamentary system in place. The tremendous efforts, battles, and final defeat of Lajos Kossuth²⁶ and his loyalists by reactionary forces are too well known for us to document here in detail. The fact remains that after the catastrophe of 1849, brought on by the Czarist Russian Army, the Hungarian nation was again plunged into darkness and, having been the target of a vengeful onslaught, it again had to take up the fight, not in order to continue its own development but to try to cast off the shackles of the oppressor. This situation lasted until the Compromise of 1867, when the Habsburgs, having been excluded from the German Confederation after their defeat at Sadowa, condescended to make peace with Hungary. This peace signalled the restitution of national sovereignty in the country and the return to a parliamentary system.

Forty-seven years were now at the disposal of the Hungarian nation, between the Compromise and the First World War, to put its house in order, and one can say without fear of exaggeration, that despite continuous quarrels with Austria over the text of the Compromise, the time was well spent. Indeed, during this period, at the cost of superhuman effort, the nation succeeded in transforming itself from a poor, primitive and backward country (the result of oppression that was more often than not secular) into a modern European State, with almost unparalleled agriculture, flourishing industry, dynamic trade, an abundant and stable currency, an extensive network of railroads, well-organized riverine and maritime shipping, beautiful cities, good hospitals, renowned schools, and modern social institutions, all guaranteed by an impeccable judicial system. Add to this a literary, artistic, intellectual and sporting life equal to that of any other European country, and you have a satisfactory picture of Hungary before the Great War.

Obviously, one could have done even better, although given the more than modest point of departure and the short span of time at the nation's disposal, the result was already quite encouraging, especially if we take into account the fact that continuing integration with Austria forced Hungary to be cautious about any reform that might undermine national forces. Nevertheless, all of this leads to the conclusion that had national enthusiasm been allowed to radiate,

Hungary would have lost no time in catching up with Western countries also in the field of democratic reforms, while at the same time safeguarding its national character. But war broke out in 1914, against Hungary's interests. As is well known, the Prime Minister opposed war by way of a vote at the Crown Council. But once war had become a reality, Count Tisza²⁷ judged that by inciting the country to rebel, he would only succeed in opening the gates to the imperialistic aspirations of its various neighbours large and small. The war took its course, and the defeat of the Central Powers, after four years of battle, while returning to Hungary its complete independence, placed a new and formidable obstacle in its path to development. From this war, made worse by Bolshevism and foreign occupation, Hungary emerged mutilated, impoverished, and shaken to such an extent that nearly everything had to be renewed and rebuilt once more. Despite all the difficulties, the nation tackled the tasks at hand with courage, and whoever saw Hungary twenty years later, that is, on the eve of the Second World War, could easily confirm that the country succeeded not only in repairing the damage, but also in attaining a level of development superior to that of pre-World War One Hungary. Nevertheless, the reproach aimed at Hungary was the same: the state had not sufficiently advanced in terms of democracy. Indeed, all the privileges of class had not yet disappeared, electoral law was not radical enough, the great landowners still held on to their vast properties, Jews could not exercise their civil rights in full, and—not to forget anything—the Communist Party was banned. Of course, all of these restrictions and imperfections had their deeper origins in the fear of a social breakdown, which, rightly or wrongly, was judged to be the first step toward Bolshevism, already experienced in 1919, as well as the need to minimize economic distress by preventing any reduction in agricultural production, the country's principal resource. However, there was in principle no unforeseen difficulty or obstruction to an orderly and timely move towards a modern democratic system. In all likelihood this development still would not have satisfied everyone because, had the Western conception of democracy prevailed totally in Hungary, Hungarian democracy would consequently have been established along the lines of this latter model. As one can see, this form of democracy was not appreciated everywhere to the same degree.

It follows from the aforementioned factors that Hungary's flaws were not particularly serious, but strictly speaking the country's leaders did err by not embracing the democratic faith and by not publicly associating themselves

with the camp of the democrats. Others did so, although their intentions were not more sincere, nor were their actions more commendable, but as we have stated above, it is primarily the declaration of faith that matters in politics.

However, joining the camp of democrats would have provoked Hitler, since the Third Reich's objectives were too ambitious to allow any insecurity along its borders. In fact, to publicly advertise its democracy would have meant leaving Hungary's door wide open to the powers that were observing the rise of Hitler's Germany with a suspicious eye. Besides, the Führer was in no way inclined to allow his political opponents to grab positions, which he needed for himself. And what interest could Hungary conceivably have in angering Hitler, especially since it turned out that he might be agreeable to a possible rectification of the borders of Trianon? Evidently none. At any rate, the Western Powers had no such expectations. Had they not shown clearly enough in guaranteeing the integrity of *Romania* and *Greece* following the Prague coup that they intended to halt the German expansion? At the same time, German propaganda in Hungary, with a budget hardly smaller than that of the entire Hungarian State, did not let up in repeating that if Hungary should embrace the National Socialist way of life, the Hungarian nation would surely gain favours from its powerful neighbour, with all the added advantages that such a stance could entail for the future. Although the Hungarian people were not particularly responsive to propaganda, all of this did not fail to affect public opinion.

On the other hand, the Hungarian people's impression of democracy had not always been encouraging. First of all, their own short-lived democratic regime (November 1918–March 1919), the “Popular Republic” of Count Mihály Károlyi²⁸ was not exactly a success. Despite the sincere efforts of its leaders to achieve almost all of what Hungary's opponents had recommended in their propaganda during the war, it did not take long for the “Popular Republic” to collapse, due to a complete lack of understanding of those same opponents. In addition, it was in the name of democracy that the conquerors of 1918 carved up Hungary. Czechoslovakia, where Hungarian minorities were degraded to the rank of second-class citizens, was constantly represented as the finest example of a modern democracy. Romania and Yugoslavia, where the Hungarian minorities were openly oppressed, were treated as allies by the great democracies. And of the great

democracies, it was really only France that over the course of history had any real influence on the Hungarian spirit—and not even France was its former self anymore. Indeed, since the time when the immortal writings of the French philosophers of the 18th century had fed the flames of the reform movement in Hungary and the spirit of the revolution of February had ignited, in March of 1848, the flame of the progressive youth of Pest, French democracy had come a long way. Its flag often changed colours and the carpet covering the platform wore thin from having been rolled out time and time again, welcoming just about everyone. Thus Hungarian patriots no longer paid heed to official French policy, which favoured all their political opponents; the democracy of the Popular Front with all its chaos and infighting no longer appealed to Hungary. Neither did the fact that the Soviet Union had openly declared itself a champion of democracy, leading the way by siding with the Spanish Republic, win over new recruits in Hungary to the cause of democracy. Quite to the contrary, it only caused confusion in their minds, and then one could still ignore the assertion that the only true democracy was that of the Soviet brand.

Nevertheless, there were many people in the country who were deeply attached to the democratic cause, despite the lack of interest the West showed them; the anti-fascists unfailingly believed in it, despite the attempts of dictatorships to seduce the Hungarian people. It was first of all among the organized Social Democratic masses that the trade unions operated unhindered, until the occupation of the country by the Germans. The Socialists maintained a good press and were equal to the task. Their deputies in Parliament were also conscious of their duty. In addition, there were radical bourgeois elements solidly entrenched in the commercial districts of the capital, also with a strong press and their own deputies in the Chamber, notably Károly Rassay,²⁹ one of the most illustrious of Hungarian parliamentarians. In addition, there was Count István Bethlen, the veteran statesman who depended on liberal circles deeply rooted in the economic and intellectual life of the country. Their press, perhaps the best of all, included two important international magazines: *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*³⁰ and *The Hungarian Quarterly*³¹ providing, until the German occupation, important information on democratic issues. Finally, there was the Smallholders Party with Tibor Eckhardt³² as president and Zoltán Tildy³³ (at present President of the Republic), Father Béla Varga,³⁴ as well

as the late lamented Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky³⁵ (executed by the Nazis) as vice-presidents. This party, fundamentally democratic, depended not only on rural farmers, but on a considerable segment of the liberal lower middle-class, and had an important though dangerous role to play during the pre-war and war years. The party never abandoned its motto: "Liberty Inside, Independence Outside," which means to fight attempts to subjugate the people, and fend off foreign pressure that leads to loss of freedom of action. Now that the party is in government, it is fervently hoped that it will continue to pursue its programme with unwavering firmness.

To these antifascist parties, we must add a Catholic party known as the Christian Party, at least in the sense that it repeatedly affirmed its loathing for Nazism and its belief in the democratic cause. This played a very important role in the political life of the country, given that it was strongly supported by the clergy and had at its disposal a formidable press.

On the other side there was the government party known alternately as the Party of Unity and the Party of National Unity, and finally as the Hungarian Life Party, which with its impressive number of representatives in Parliament assured the government an overwhelming majority. However, a parliamentary majority did not necessarily mean a majority in the country, for electoral results, subject to the different means of pressure in the hands of those in power—and this was true not only in Hungary, of course—did not always faithfully represent the will of the people. Furthermore, the great majority of the party did not always facilitate the government's task because instead of reckoning with the Chamber, it had to reckon with the party, which was not always easy to do. The party was docile only during the premiership of Gömbös who as a tough military man knew how to command the respect of his people, and who—not withstanding how little inspired the people were by the fascist allure—was possessed of a fundamental political integrity and of an uprightness above all suspicion. However, what the party accepted from Gömbös, it no longer accepted from Imrédy, Gömbös's successor after the latter's death, to the point that when Imrédy pushed his dictatorial desires a little too far, a considerable number of deputies left the party in 1938 and joined the opposition. Teleki met with the same difficulties, but in the opposite sense. As the very antipode of Gömbös and Imrédy, it was altogether natural that Teleki's ideas could be shared with those deputies whose constitutional sense and patriotic spirit had been able to resist the seduction of dictatorships. And

some still remained in the party. Thus Teleki believed that his first duty should be to make use of the general elections to increase the number of trustworthy deputies in his own party. We should stress that his attempt was only partially successful since, with the very limited time available to him before the elections and the precautions he was obliged to take in view of German suspicion, he was unable to change all the electoral management of the party. Indeed, he was only able to designate his own candidates in a certain number of districts, as well as give instructions for the strengthening of the patriotic tone of electoral propaganda. Yet to eliminate all the pro-Nazi candidates and especially to protect the parties of the left from his own party—which he neglected, his critics later charged—was beyond his power and indeed, beyond the realm of possibilities.

Thus, the election left the party known as the Hungarian Life Party stronger than ever in numbers, to the detriment of the liberal parties.* But it proved also to be its weakness, as its core elements became even more diverse. Indeed, from old liberals to young hooligans, from sincere patriots to headstrong fascists all found a place in the party. Each faction had its popular press. Between these extremes could be found the great majority of the deputies without any strong leanings; these deputies distinguished themselves by a remarkable degree of political incompetence and a tendency to drift from one side to the other, motivated only by the presumed likelihood of success. A composition such as this limited the government's freedom of action in internal as well as in foreign affairs; the extent of the party's support alone dictated its possibilities. The government constantly had to take into account the fact that in foreign affairs pro-Axis forces dominated even after the exodus of Imrédy and his few loyalists, an exodus that occurred during the first year of the war. Nevertheless, the sympathy shown towards Germany and Italy was primarily aimed at these two States and far less at the Nazi and Fascist parties. What the majority of the party expected from the two Axis countries was a benevolent attitude regarding Hungarian revisionist objectives and certainly not the introduction of their political system in Hungary. Along with all these hoped-for advantages, the pro-Axis deputies were prepared to show a friendly attitude towards the

* The 1935 elections returned 171 deputies for the government party, and the elections of 1939 brought this number up to 183.

political aims of Germany and Italy, though without wanting to take part in the carnage on their side. Yet, while showing very little warlike eagerness, they voted for war without hesitation, slavishly in fact, once Parliament was presented with the Bárdossy government's *fait accompli*. As soon as war was voted on, the pro-Axis deputies were prepared to accept all its consequences.

As for the friends of Teleki, all they had to do at the beginning was follow their leader, and as long as he was alive, all was well—or nearly. However, after the suicide of this great statesman³⁶ they were left like a flock without their shepherd until, with the war well underway, they gathered around Professor Laky,³⁷ a man of integrity whose orientation was strongly pro-Allies. In the meantime they did nothing to oppose the war, at least not publicly, for fear that their opposition would lead to their exodus from the party, which would mean abandoning the field to their pro-Axis opponents. Indeed, without their presence in the party, there would have been no one to restrain the government, so that at least Hungary's participation in the war of the Axis powers could be reduced to the bare, indispensable minimum. Furthermore, they planned to form an invaluable support group with the intention of supporting the government the moment the situation would allow Hungary to free itself from German pressure. Prime Minister Kállay, Bárdossy's successor, understood them perfectly, and attached great value to their collaboration. However, all the initiatives of Prime Minister Kállay and his friends were shattered by the German occupation of the country in March of 1944. At that moment, this group of deputies left the party, which, after this exodus, descended into shameful collaboration with the invaders. From the first days of the occupation, the Gestapo³⁸ arrested many of them, including their *leader*, Professor Laky.

However, let us not get ahead of ourselves. We shall have further opportunity to discuss the various stages of the Hungarian tragedy; for the moment, we have only reached the elections of 1939! As noted before, these elections assured the governing party an overwhelming majority to the detriment of the liberal parties. Instead of the weakened left, the government had to reckon from now on with a highly undesirable opposition from the right. This was the Nyilas or Arrow Cross Party, a thoroughly Nazi formation, worthy representatives of a fifth column, elected thanks to German gold and completely beholden to their masters in the Reich. Later,

after the departure of Imrédy and his acolytes from the governing party, these two groups shook hands and tried to outdo each other in Parliament in the fervour to push the country into the arms of the German demon.

This change in the balance of power did not affect the Senate, known as the *Upper Chamber*, as its members were not elected. They included representatives of the old aristocracy, of different national institutions and corporations, official dignitaries and personalities nominated by the Regent. There was not one Nazi in the Upper Chamber and even the pro-Axis members among them were in the minority. Nevertheless, the majority of the senators supported the government before as well as during the war, inspired by the same political considerations that had determined the attitude of liberal members of the governing party.

Concerning the elections, one detail of particular political interest was the fact that Count Csáky, Minister of Foreign Affairs judged it opportune to have himself elected as the deputy representing Sopron, a city situated a bare few kilometres from the Austrian border, already German at the time of the elections. This city, a part of Western Hungary later known as Burgenland had been declared part of Austria by the Treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon; nevertheless, due to Hungarian manoeuvres the Great Powers eventually consented to a plebiscite to decide the fate of Sopron and a few neighbouring villages. Hungary won the plebiscite and Sopron and its environs remained Hungarian.³⁹ Of course the Austrians were none too pleased, nor were the Germans, for having already imagined the Anschluss,⁴⁰ they strongly supported the Austrian cause during the plebiscite. After the Anschluss in 1938, Hungary found itself exposed to the considerable pressure of German propaganda, and it turned out to be most unbearable in Sopron and its environs. All those who in 1921 had voted for union with Austria became, as if by the wave of a magic wand, fanatical propagators of German Nazism and were openly supported by the special services of German expansionism. By the candidacy of its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hungary intended to signal to Germany its firm determination that Hungarian sovereignty over this millennial city was not to be called in question. Germany took up the gauntlet and set itself against the election of Count Csáky as deputy from Sopron. Then, in a manner that was completely intolerable, the Germans almost openly

supported the opponent of the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was a member of the Arrow Cross Party. Csáky won a very close election and became the deputy from Sopron, but his Nazi adversary managed to get himself elected in another powerful constituency, thanks to the support of his powerful protectors.

HUNGARY'S POSITION ON THE EVE OF THE WORLD WAR

In broad outline, such was the political situation in Hungary on the eve of the Second World War. For impartial observers, Germany itself, as well as the presence of pro-Axis elements in the country, constituted an obvious danger and a bad omen for the future, but counterbalancing this danger, there was the firm determination of the government not to allow itself to be dragged into the coming war, and they could count on the calm and peaceful majority of the people. It is all too regrettable that the resources sustaining the positive frame of mind of the Hungarian government and the people turned out later on to be weak and insufficient.

When in August of 1939 the German-Polish quarrel turned venomous and—because Hitler wanted war and, confident that the great democracies will make good on their promise to help their ally—Poland decided to defend itself, the Hungarian government felt the need to define its position. Teleki leaned towards neutrality, pure and simple, but finally it was Count Csáky's view that prevailed and *non-belligerence* was decided upon. Csáky went to see Hitler and Ribbentrop in August to put out feelers, and his subsequent impression was that the Germans considered a Hungarian declaration of neutrality to be an unfriendly attitude. The Hungarian government, having no support from the other side, not even a promise, did not believe it should expose the country to the harmful consequences of the Reich's animosity, especially since Berlin was already unfavourably disposed towards Hungary and its government.

Meanwhile, as the storm that would sweep the world approached, the question of whether to declare oneself neutral or non-belligerent was but a minor detail. It was essential to understand the heart of the problem and to be conscious of the hidden forces driving a major war. It mattered

very much to know the state of readiness of the forces facing one another and to make a long-term prognosis. Here was a moment for clairvoyance because, as they say, *to govern is to foresee*. On the basis of this prediction, always taking into account one's own possibilities, of course, a decision becomes apparent, not only as to the attitude one should adopt for the moment, but also, and especially, the policy one should follow. These thoughts probably preoccupied Teleki. In the long run, though, the exact, the perfect course of action eluded him. At any rate, given all that we know today, even the most logical of predictions could turn out to be erroneous. However, with enough reflection one could at least have reached a negative conclusion that would have made sense, and according to that conclusion neither Hungary nor any other state in Eastern Europe could on its own influence the course of events. These unfortunate countries were destined to be crushed or engulfed by one or the other of the warring giants, or by one and then the other, according to the ebb and flow of war. Indeed, all succumbed, some by resisting in self-defence, others by capitulating in order to escape. It is only Czechoslovakia who got off rather lightly due to the consummate political skill of Prime Minister Beneš who knew how to exit in good time, only to return when it suited him, and knew also how to select his protectors, one after the other, each at the right time. In that, Teleki was his inferior, for he knew only how to die...

However, let us return to the matter at hand. If Hungary, instead of establishing the broad outlines of its policy, had limited itself to defining its position according to circumstances, it was not so much due to a lack of determination and sense of political responsibility, but to paralysis caused by the extraordinary intricacy of the international situation. Choosing between Germany and Poland was impossible. To act against Germany would surely be suicide; on the other hand, to act against Poland could not be considered an option because of the traditional, unshakable friendship between the two nations. Then there was the Soviet Union, the great unknown, resolute enemy of Nazi Germany since the rise of Nazism, but its partner since August 23, 1939.

The German-Soviet Pact⁴¹ astounded the entire world; thus it was no surprise that the Hungarian government, which no longer had a legation in Moscow, was also caught off-guard. One could not help wondering what goal Russia could possibly have with this unexpected volte-face; what

ambitions did it hope to satisfy as a partner of Germany that it could not as a friend of the Western democracies? One could guess without too much perspicacity that for Russia there was far more at stake than just claiming an advance share of the vivisection of doomed Poland. One wondered anxiously what Germany might be obliged to give its new ally to maintain this pact and especially what the Western democracies might have to promise in the future to persuade the latter to return to them? So many questions with no answers!

One thing appeared reasonably clear: in the given situation the Western powers, for a long time to come, would not be able to provide effective aid to the small countries of Eastern Europe. They would therefore have to manage as best they could with the Reich. Everything else was obscure.

HUNGARY IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

This was Hungary's position when, on September 1, 1939, Hitler attacked Poland, going to war two days later with England and France. Given the circumstances, Count Csáky thought it imperative to see Ribbentrop again, to be better informed of the Reich's intentions and, if possible, of its Bolshevik partner's intentions as well. The meeting took place on September 9 in Austria. Ribbentrop was merely passing through, so apart from a few vague phrases about certain victory he had little to say to his Hungarian colleague. So it was with understandable surprise that two days later, on Saturday afternoon, Count Csáky received a telephone call from Ribbentrop. The latter, adopting a most courteous tone of voice—quite an effort for him!—announced that he had forgotten the other day to ask for “a small favour”, the Hungarian government's consent to the passage through the north of Hungary of a German contingent, on its way to launch an attack on the Polish army from the rear. And to remind Csáky clearly what territory Germany had in mind, he added that the German contingent would pass through the region returned to Hungary by the Vienna accord. Here was an excellent chance for Hungary to show its gratitude. It only had to say *yes*, and the debt of gratitude would be paid. In this event, even though admitting that the Vienna decision was not a reward for services rendered, it could very well be an encouragement for services to be rendered in the future. Thus, the presumption that by

accepting the restitution of part of its ancient territories Hungary placed itself inevitably under German command, received a ringing endorsement. Except Hungary said: "No." This was the immediate, spontaneous response of Count Csáky on the telephone, and the following day the negative response was confirmed by the Crown Council. The decision was accepted unanimously with no further discussion. The refusal was conveyed to the government of the Reich in good time and orders were dispatched forthwith to the army to repel the Germans should the urge overcome them to force their way through Hungarian territory.

If one judges Hungary's firm attitude from the point of view of the realist school of international diplomacy, one might notice that for the risks taken there was no assurance of compensation from the other side. If at that moment Germany decided to clamp down, Hungary would have been annihilated in one blow, leaving Regent Horthy to say in the manner of François I: "All was lost except our honour." Yet Germany did not clamp down, probably because it understood that all of Hungary, except those on the Germans' payroll, was ready to defend Hungarian honour. Besides, why hurry? Germany *knew* that Hungary could not escape from its clutches; time was on the Reich's side. After all, for an immense empire with formidable military and economic resources and all the seductive power to tempt revisionist Hungary, as well as its usual lack of scruples, what else could happen after years of conscious effort to sap the will to resist of a small country isolated from the rest of the world, a country that had only two choices: *Submit or perish!*

But at this time there was not yet any bowing and scraping. On the contrary, Hungary's indifference to Germany's war became, after the Ribbentrop incident, all the more emphatic.

When finally the resistance of the heroic Polish army was broken and one half of the martyred country was occupied by the Germans and the other half by the Russians, a flood of Polish refugees, both military and civilian, streamed into Hungary. This was an outstanding opportunity for Hungarians to show once again their sympathy for this great friend of a nation, and indeed, all segments of society rushed to help those unfortunate people, despite the vigilant eyes of the Germans fixed on Hungary. This show of friendship towards the Poles was so striking that even strongly pro-Nazi newspapers dared not write against it. But what most heartened

the Polish patriots was the immediate creation of Hungarian organizations aimed at clandestinely sending their soldiers over the Yugoslav border to rejoin the Polish army in England. Thanks to this organization, nearly 100,000 soldiers were able to continue to fight for the Allied cause.

Things continued at this pace, for better or worse, when news arrived that Soviet Russia, not content with having occupied, together with Germany, almost half of Poland, had attacked Finland. If the Poles had forever been regarded as true friends of the Hungarians, the Finns were their blood brothers, and the aggression they faced was keenly felt throughout the country. The simple fact that a great power without the slightest hint of remorse would attack such a small country, one of the least populated in Europe, simply because it coveted a bit of that country's territory, sickened the Hungarian public, whose faith in international morality had not yet dissipated at this time. Thus, the Hungarian people felt the blow against Finland as if it had been directed against them. Manifestations of sympathy for this courageous Nordic nation poured forth on the part of many Hungarians, accompanied by donations of money and provisions, at an almost unheard of pace. Furthermore, there was a desire to fight on the side of Finland, and this desire was so intense, the government felt obliged to consent to the recruitment, equipment and dispatch to Finland by way of France and England of a Hungarian expeditionary force. All of this did nothing to increase German sympathy for Hungary, to say nothing of Russia's displeasure.

Spring arrived and the German war machine was set into motion to carry out the great and decisive assault against France. To better secure the rear guard, the *Führer's* army invaded Denmark first. After this, it was Norway's turn, then Belgium's and the Netherlands'. Finally, Hitler seized France with no intention of letting it go. The "Bogus War" was over; this time it was the real thing with all its horrors and hardships. Anglo-French resistance reeled before the formidable shock of the *Panzers* and *Stukas*⁴²; corps after corps were swept aside once the Maginot line⁴³ was bypassed, the glorious battlefields of the last war were traversed by formations of German tanks and the remains of the British expeditionary force was hurled into the sea at Dunkirk. The extent of the losses suffered by the French could barely be calculated. Then finally, *Paris*, too, fell, followed by an armistice—in short, total defeat!

Hungarian public opinion was stunned by these events because no one had expected the rapid and complete downfall of France. No one, except for the Nazis, rejoiced over it. On the contrary, a considerable portion of the population, especially what we call the *educated classes*, showed sincere compassion for France, the common homeland of modern European civilization. Yet nothing could change the fact that after the collapse of France, Germany had no more enemies on the Continent, over which it had become absolute master, seconded by Italy.

In this situation, the Hungarian government, with Teleki still at the helm, found that it would be dangerous to persist in this indifferent, indeed negative attitude about the conqueror of the hour, who could wipe out one thousand years of national effort with a wave of his hand. Furthermore, the government had to take into account the persuasion, even agitation that was beginning to make itself felt in the wake of the intense activities of pro-German groups, after a year of relative calm. Their reasoning was rather simplistic, though it had its effect. "What are we Hungarians waiting for" said these voices, "it is time to embark on the path of practical revisionism, have we not filled the world with our cries for twenty years? Have we not pleaded that we were done an injustice at the Peace Conference, and that for peace to become a reality, have we not called for the return to the homeland of at least three and a half million pure Magyars awarded to neighbouring states without their consent? And what have we regained to date? Some Hungarians from Slovakia and the Ruthene province. From Romania where we have nearly two million Magyars, nothing; from Yugoslavia where we have about 700,000, again nothing. Now that Germany is the indisputable master of Europe, we must take advantage of it; we must win its good will, earn its support. Because without Germany, no European border can change; still less so against its will. What can we expect then from other signatories of the Treaty of Trianon? From those who until recently guaranteed the territorial integrity of Romania? From the friends of Czechoslovakia who must consider it their moral obligation to again piece together this country after their victory, should they ever be the victors? From governments that have already labelled us a satellite of Germany, no matter what we do? We must therefore abandon our passive position and resolutely take our place on the side of Germany, while there is still time."

That was in no way the language of a Teleki, but as we have noted above, he also understood that in order not to run dangerous risks, he had to make some sort of gesture towards Germany. He made this *gesture* at the expense of the Hungarian press.

THE FIRST CAPITULATION TO GERMANY. THE HUNGARIAN PRESS

The Hungarian press was free enough at the time, despite the censorship imposed at the beginning of the war. Groups representing opposing political trends had their press organs, and those of the government were not the strongest, and certainly not the best written. We should add that several government newspapers, particularly the most provocative, founded at the time of Gömbös, were rather an embarrassment to the Hungarian government because they were exponents of political outlooks that expressed perfectly the views of the right wing of the governing party, but they were far from the ideas of Pál Teleki. If he was unhappy with these organs, why not shut them down, one might wonder. The reason was quite simple. If Teleki had been in the comfortable position of not having to take into account what we already referred to as “the presence of Germany on the borders and inside the country as well”, he would certainly not have missed the opportunity to change many things, and the so-called government press would no longer be tolerated either. But precisely *because* Teleki had to consider the German threat, or the German factor, if that sounds better, he did not think it prudent to denounce a press, which he had nothing to do with. He preferred to win over several newspapers to his ideas, to establish others, and as far as he was concerned, to work with the liberal press, which in theory at least was in opposition. It was this tactic, forced on him by circumstances that gave birth to the paradoxical situation whereby the liberal opposition press was much closer to the government than most of the government’s own publications. Except for a few interim disruptions, this situation prevailed until the German occupation of March 1944.

One of these disruptions, not the most minor, was caused precisely by the stunning victory of the German armies in France, while Teleki, as already noted, decided to pay tribute to the conqueror of Europe at the expense of

the Hungarian press. All the directors of the journals, telegraphic agencies and radio were summoned to the Press Bureau of the Prime Minister to be admonished by the government. The wish expressed by the Chief of Press of the Prime Minister was succinct but categorical: the press must cease hedging and take positions resolutely in favour of Germany. (The author of this memoir, who was Chief of Press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was deliberately asked to stay away from this meeting by Prime Minister Teleki, who was keen to have more elbowroom later.) Right- and extreme right-wing newspapers could not have asked for more, so they got down to business, singing the praises of the Führer with a zeal deserving a better cause... These governmental instructions also had their effect on the left-leaning press, which without saying anything positive about Germany was extraordinarily reticent in all matters relating to the Axis. The Hungarian radio, until that point rather hostile to Hitler, was allocated a sort of *political adviser* in the person of an enthusiastic young official with fascist leanings who distinguished himself to such an extent that already the next day, many subscribers listening to their usual Hungarian news thought they had mistakenly tuned into a programme coming from ... Berlin.

Luckily, as no radical innovation lasts too long in Hungary, the press was back in the old groove fairly quickly. However, after Teleki's death, no Hungarian government would again dare to publicly revoke instructions already accepted. Yet the overseeing of the press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included, despite everything, a firm insistence on the independence of the Hungarian national press. From then on, the policies of the Ministry provoked the opposition not only of the right-wing press, but also a major part of the pro-government mainstream press; and often it did not heed, not even perfunctorily, directives issued by the government.

The Germans received the first sign of capitulation from official Hungary without any obvious sign of satisfaction. They simply took note of it. The word that best describes their attitude towards Hungary at this time is indifference. In truth, they had bigger fish to fry—what preoccupied them now was the grandiose plan to invade England. Hungary was not yet on the agenda; it was left in peace, for the time being.

THE RECOVERY OF NORTHERN TRANSYLVANIA. THE SECOND VIENNA AWARD

It was Hungary that soon attracted the attention of Germany, and in a way completely unforeseen: by bringing up the question of Transylvania.

Let us quickly note that we have no intention of explaining here the Hungarian point of view concerning this question because on no account do we want to deliver judgement on Romania, whose position today is no more enviable than that of Hungary. We shall just say what everyone knows, namely that Transylvania and other neighbouring regions populated by nearly four million people had been awarded to Romania by the Peace Conference after the First World War. Of this entire population—Romanian, Magyar and German—1,700,000 were pure Magyars according to Hungarian statistics and 1,400,000 according to Romanian statistics. The divergence was therefore not that considerable. We should again reiterate that there was no consultation with the people prior to the transfer of territory, and the Hungarians of Transylvania in particular never ceased to lament their lot. For its part, Hungary, having felt the loss of Transylvania more painfully than that of all its other territories combined, never let an opportunity pass without raising its voice and clamouring for the return of the “jewel in the Crown of Saint Stephen”.

Of course this did not please Romania; indeed, that country never missed a chance to throw its own arguments into the equation. But since the Hungarian revisionist campaign was conducted only with words that were, ultimately, harmless, it got off relatively lightly. How many countries would be happy today, after the total victory of the Allies, to know for certain that for the next twenty years their territorial integrity would only be disturbed by the clamour of propaganda!

Although Hungarian revisionism did not stop Romania and the other successor states from peacefully enjoying their possessions for many years, in Geneva and elsewhere reproach rained down on Hungary as if it were the only country disturbing the peace. Few were the serious statesmen and zealous journalists who did not exhort Hungary to stop becoming agitated over a mere three and a half million Magyars, because by doing so it could not fail to introduce into the international arena an element

of insecurity, disturbing thereby the League of Nations, guardian of the peace. In what dark colours they depicted the dreadful consequences that the slightest crack in the edifice established by the Treaties would cause to world peace. “*Peace is indivisible*”, intoned Mr. Litvinov⁴⁴ in Geneva, and these words made such a deep impression that the Prime Minister of Great Britain⁴⁵ thought he had to repeat them twenty years later in his inaugural speech to the United Nations’ first General Assembly. Integral anti-revisionism gained a following, and a shadow of suspicion fell upon a state such as Hungary, which had different ideas about the consolidation of peace. Anti-revisionist views were typical and came to characterize the entire period.

Yet what happened in the meantime? No state qualifying as anti-revisionist, Hungary included, carried out as successful a policy of revisionism as Russia, the power whose representative in Geneva made himself into the prophet of anti-revisionism. Because, as we know, Soviet Russia enriched itself, thanks to effective expansionist activities, adding to its territories half of Poland, part of Finland, as well as the Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Following these initial successes, it turned its attention to Romania. We are well aware of the famous ultimatum of June 26, 1940, in which Moscow ordered Romania to forfeit in the space of twenty-four hours all of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. Abandoned by its friends at the moment of greatest danger, Romania had no choice but to yield. Thus, the initial rupture was produced in the territorial statute established by the post-World War One Peace Treaties. Under these circumstances Hungary, which since the establishment of Greater Romania had never ceased to contest its borders, presumed that its own claims would not be considered inferior to those of any other country and therefore hastened to announce them.

These claims were focused, in theory at least, on everything that Hungary had been forced to relinquish to Romania. Consequently, to claim that they were modest would be imprecise, to say the least. All the same, Hungary was only following the precedent set by the Soviet Union, which had insisted on the full retrocession of its former territories. The only difference was that to support its claims, Hungary had at hand far fewer convincing arguments in terms of armoured divisions; thus it had to act with measured caution. However, it did not push this caution to the extreme, that is, it did not neglect to concentrate troops on the Hungarian–

Romanian border, inspired no doubt by the wise counsel of Machiavelli who said: "All armed prophets triumph, and the unarmed ones perish."

But Romania, unable to find a protector against Russia, quickly found one against Hungary, in the person of Hitler. In fact, nothing could be more unpleasant for Germany than disorder along its eastern border. A nearly year-old alliance with Soviet Russia had taught the Reich that it was imprudent to give its partner an opportunity to fish in troubled waters. So Hitler lost no time informing the Hungarian government that he was not prepared to tolerate any Hungarian manoeuvres against Romania. Whereupon the Hungarian government responded that following the action of Soviet Russia, it was not prepared to postpone its claims against Romania for a month of Sundays. To end the impasse, the Reich recommended that Romania come to a friendly agreement with Hungary. From that point on, the pace of events quickened. Here are the stages:

Arrival in Budapest of Mr. Raoul Bossy,⁴⁶ Romanian Minister Plenipotentiary; confirmation on the part of the Romanian government of its good intentions to settle the dispute amicably at a more appropriate time than the present; and until such time, confident and friendly collaboration between the two countries. Response of the Hungarian government: most appreciative of the offer of friendship, but a satisfactory territorial solution was required without delay. Departure of Minister Bossy; a further intervention by Germany, upon which a meeting is arranged between the Hungarian and Romanian negotiators at Turnu-Severin, a Romanian city on the banks of the Danube. Romanian proposal: exchange of populations between the two countries with assignment of territory to the extent that there would be more Hungarians to be transferred in Hungary than Romanians in Romania. Hungarian point of view: the object of negotiations must not be the exchange of populations with an incidental assignment of territory, but rather an assignment of territory with an eventual, voluntary exchange of populations. Result: rupture in negotiations, continuation of Hungarian military preparations, followed by new German summons to proceed with negotiations. Whereupon the Hungarian government notes the ill will of Romania, which makes it impossible to reach agreement through direct negotiations. Finally: invitations issued by the German and Italian governments to the Foreign Ministers of Hungary and Romania to meet in Vienna with a view to reaching an agreement between the two

countries in the presence of the German and Italian Foreign Ministers. It was under these circumstances that the meeting in Vienna took place.⁴⁷

Let us note first of all that when Count Csáky, accompanied by Teleki, arrived in Vienna, he did not yet know that the matter would be submitted to arbitration. It was his Romanian colleague, Mihail Manoilescu,⁴⁸ who requested the German-Italian arbitration, probably to avoid taking public responsibility for having his country voluntarily give in to Hungary. The proposed arbitration having been—naturally enough—accepted by Hungary, Ribbentrop and Ciano had only to establish in detail the line of the new frontier, the groundwork of which had already been established during a conference with Hitler. This is how Transylvania was cut in two and Hungary obtained a territory of 44,000 square kilometres with a population of nearly two million souls, with a slight Magyar majority. Romania was given fifteen days to hand over the territory.

It was indisputably a nice gift, albeit inferior by half to what Romania had received after the First World War. Nevertheless, to increase the size of the country by a region considerably larger than Switzerland was a remarkable success for the Teleki government, even more so if one considers the fact that it was not for having participated in Germany's war that Hungary had regained a large portion of lost territory, but on the contrary, for abstaining from any hostile action.

It goes without saying that the Hungarian population received its Prime Minister and Foreign Minister with the warmest of accolades upon their return from Vienna, although they regretted that the new border had been drawn with limited intelligence, having left Romania with a sizable ethnic minority and in return, having assigned to Hungary several purely Romanian regions. But Germany, which had already set its heart on Romania at this point, made sure that certain mining and industrial regions, as well as the railroad line linking them to Bucharest were not affected by the transfer. Moreover, the Hungarians, who still looked back on the arbitrary manner in which their borders had been designated by the Treaty of Trianon, were not unduly surprised that their new masters were following the same example. All in all, we gambled and won; this is what mattered at the moment. It is true that one person's happiness is another's sorrow, but throughout history this has always been the case, and the Hungarians could still recall under what terms Aristide Briand, the French Foreign Minister had justified before the French Senate twenty years earlier

the new frontiers of Hungary. “It is impossible,” declared M. Briand, “to lay down the frontiers of justice as you demanded just now; someone is bound to get hurt. *Between Romania and Hungary, I prefer that it not be Romania that gets hurt...*”** The borders agreed on in Vienna did not serve justice either, only the roles were now reversed, and it was Romania that got badly wounded.

At least, this is what one believed. But from this wound inflicted on Romania, it was Hungary that fell victim in the end!

Indeed, it soon became clear that in initiating this action to reclaim Transylvania, and especially in allowing Germany to become involved in this affair, Teleki did not have a lucky hand. Obviously, he meant well, at least for his own country; being himself a son of Transylvania, he had always cherished the thought that this territory would be returned to the motherland in his lifetime. Since this desire was shared by the entire country, Teleki would have had to be endowed with exceptional perception to resist the temptation. Yet, had his ardent desire remained unfulfilled, he might still be alive today, or at least he would not have died by his own hand. Then many things in Hungary would have happened differently. Why?

We related above in what ways Nazi propaganda had tried to use the First Vienna Award to force Hungary to close ranks behind the Reich. We also saw that this propaganda had not been very successful, and Hungary simply carried on. This time, however, the danger was more acute. The reoccupation of half of Transylvania was indeed a more substantial gain, and here Germany’s role was more decisive. There were few people in Hungary who criticized Hitler for having prevented the Hungarian government from settling its accounts directly with Romania, the majority clearly preferring the arrangement reached “on friendly terms” thanks to the intervention of the Reich. The nation sensed instinctively that this time it had taken on a debt to Hitler that could not be repaid with a mere “thank you”, especially since as a consequence of the arbitrage a rivalry had developed between Hungary and Romania, with Hitler having been tacitly accepted as an arbitrator. This was a great danger, worsened by the fact that Hitler was now at war with England and might soon be with who knows what other

** *Journal Officiel* (Débats parlementaires, Sénat), 3e séance de juillet 11, 1921, p. 1703

countries. Thus, it was feared that each “small favour” he asked of Hungary would be seen as a hostile act against England and its allies.

In other words, Hungary had fallen into a trap. Obviously, it would have been better to consider everything one last time before beginning the affair. The Hungarian government would have lost nothing by remembering the old Hungarian proverb which warns that it is dangerous to eat off the plate of the mighty, for it is the powerful that always set the price of the meal. Hungary’s obvious interest would have been to lie low without getting involved with the Axis powers and to defer the realization of its wishes, even those closest to its heart. To know how to bide one’s time is indeed the greatest art in politics. Hungary’s sin was impatience and it cost it dearly.

HUNGARY’S PAYMENT FOR TRANSYLVANIA. HUNGARY’S AUTONOMY FROM GERMANY. ENTERING THE TRIPARTITE PACT

It was in Vienna that Ribbentrop presented the first bill—an invitation for Hungary to settle, by way of a treaty with Germany, the status of the German minority, the so-called *Volksdeutsche* in Hungary. After accepting the handsome gift from Ribbentrop’s own hands, Hungary would have been ungracious to respond negatively. Thus, a treaty was signed on the very date of the arbitrage, a treaty by which Hungary consented to have these *Volksdeutsche*, numbering some 600,000, joined in an autonomous nationalist-socialist organization within the heart of the Hungarian State. What is more, this organization was to be placed under the direct control of the Reich. The Hungarian government also promised—though nowhere in the treaty is this mentioned—to allow no other German organization to exist in the country.

By this stratagem Germany officially moved into Hungary!

The second polite *request* came two and a half months later as another invitation addressed to the Hungarian government to join the Tripartite Pact. Ribbentrop took care to add to this message that if it hurried, Hungary would benefit from the “honour” of being the first to join, otherwise Romania would sign before it...

To say that the country was delighted by this “honour” would be a lie, but unfortunately one felt Hungary was led into a cul-de-sac from which all exits had been sealed. It was no longer master of its own decisions. On the other hand, at this time Hungarian leaders were not yet aware of all the traps of the famous Pact. If the Axis powers, above all Germany, were acting in good faith, the consequences of joining would not have been such a disaster; but dictatorships almost never act in good faith, something that Hungary and its unfortunate neighbours realized only later, to their great displeasure.

As we know, it was in Berlin on September 27, 1940, that the Tripartite Act was concluded between Germany, Italy and Japan. According to its text, the three powers agreed to cooperate with a view towards creating and maintaining a “New Order” in Europe and in “the area of greater Asia”. The principal purpose of this association was—as the signatories confirmed—“world peace”. Japan recognized the supremacy of Germany and Italy in Europe and the two latter powers recognized that of Japan in “greater Asia”. The three contracting parties agreed to give one another “full assistance” in case one or the other became a victim of aggression on the part of a power that was not a belligerent at the moment of the signing of the Pact.

Here then was the arrangement to which Hungary subscribed in Vienna on November 20, 1940, and Romania in Berlin three days later. (One of the special features of the Pact was that no obligation united the new members to each other; their only obligation was to the principal contracting powers.) Because of their membership, Hungary and Romania thus became satellites of the Axis. Yet no one knew exactly what that entailed. In any case, the Pact did not give any clear guidance concerning the obligations of new members, but Ribbentrop, to appease the scruples of his Hungarian colleague, provided him, during the signing ceremony in Vienna with a sort of “authentic” interpretation, according to which Hungary—and presumably also the others—would have the right to decide of their own free will the nature of the assistance they would render to the principal contracting powers, should the latter ever be subject to aggression.

This is all that Count Csáky took back to Budapest, and this time his welcome was altogether different from that of two and a half months ago. Actually, it became painfully clear that the Hungarian public perceived,

for the first time since the beginning of the war, the still obscure risks of befriending a great power. It was on this occasion that the government met with the first serious attacks on its foreign policy from the liberal opposition in the Chamber of Deputies as well as the Upper Chamber.

In the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, the attack was led by Tibor Eckhardt, head of the Smallholders Party, while in the Upper Chamber Commission charged with the same duty, Count István Bethlen, the great statesman of the Hungary of old, was the principal speaker.

The two parliamentarians sharply criticized the government for having abandoned, by its adherence to the Tripartite Pact, what in reality was a policy of neutrality, carried out successfully from the beginning of the war under the guise of “non-belligerence”. They accused the government of having tied Hungary’s fate to a group of belligerent powers—at least as far as the Axis was concerned—for whom victory was by no means certain. They emphasized that a small country like Hungary, by associating itself with the Great Powers had no chance to put to good account its own interests; instead, it ran the risk of being sacrificed in the interest of its powerful partners. After all that Hungary had been able to obtain without war, its primary interest would be to protect its acquisitions and to keep out of the conflicts of the Great Powers.

These were the principle arguments elaborated by the two speakers, each according to his temperament and ability to test the truth by discussion. Count Bethlen was the gentler of the two, because he finished his address by saying that if Count Csáky had been able to assure him that it would have been impossible to refuse membership without exposing the country to even more serious and immediate danger, he would have yielded to the *fait accompli*, albeit without assenting.

The position of Count Csáky was not easy. Already this well-founded criticism had presented a problem for him, but his real difficulty stemmed from the fact that it was impossible for him to show all his cards in the presence of the pro-Nazi faction in the Chamber of Deputies. Because neither Csáky, nor any of his successors were naive enough to suppose that they could utter a single compromising word even in a secret meeting in the presence of pro-Nazi deputies, without the latter immediately denouncing them to the German Legation. In this very embarrassing situation, the

Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs had naturally neglected to explain that the war had entered a phase, which made it clear that to prolong their existence, Germany's neighbours—still intact—had to gamble audaciously, and deceptively. So he contented himself by saying more or less the following:

In the present situation, Hungary would risk more by responding negatively to Hitler than by obeying orders immediately. Germany is the master of Europe. Hungary quite recently saw how advantageous it was to be on good terms with the Reich, just as it could see, from the example of others, what it meant to be its adversary. Germany and Italy had decided to reorganize the European continent under the aegis of the Tripartite Pact. If a country's geographic position necessitates membership, then a refusal would surely entail grave consequences. If we had said no, who would have supported us? No one. We would have even lost Italy as a friend. Therefore the question is not whether or not we should join the Pact, but whether we should join first or second, to say nothing of ending up as last. Besides, Ribbentrop had assured us that our wishes would be respected in the fulfilment of our treaty obligations. As for the rest, we shall see what further possibilities will be presented to us by future events.

The members of the commissions for Foreign Affairs of the two Chambers listened attentively to Count Csáky's explanation—an explanation that clearly laid out the situation and allowed one to suppose that Ribbentrop, when informed of Csáky's comments, would be particularly displeased. But what was essential for Germany was Hungary's signature endorsing the Tripartite Pact. For the moment, the Reich had no need of Hungary as an ally. Why then alarm it by issuing a reprimand? Better to bring pressure to bear on public opinion so that the people would be well prepared for the great day of their forthcoming nuptials with Hitler.

A FAILED GERMAN MANOEUVRE: AN ATTEMPT TO SUBJUGATE THE HUNGARIAN PRESS

Only a few days after Hungary signed the Tripartite Pact, the government of the Reich proposed to Count Csáky to add to the protocol of membership an "additional secret Protocol" (*Geheimes Zusatzprotokoll*) to reinforce German-Hungarian collaboration in the area of press and propaganda.

One glance at this protocol draft was enough to make it clear that under the false appearance of parity, it meant nothing less than putting the entire Hungarian press under German control. The two parties would agree to put their presses “entirely at the service of the policies stemming from the Tripartite Pact” and to better achieve this objective, there would be “constant collaboration between the press services of the German Legation in Berlin on the one hand, and the two chiefs of press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the two countries on the other”.

Hungary’s acceptance of this protocol would have brought about the following consequences:

1. All the press of the left would have disappeared because it could not or would not put itself “entirely at the service of the policies stemming from the Tripartite Pact”.
2. The chief of press of the German Legation in Budapest would have had to present himself every day to the chief of press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with “suggestions” as to the directives to be given to the newspapers to better serve the objectives of the “policies resulting from the Tripartite Pact”. Non-observation of the “suggestions” would have been considered by the Germans a violation of the signed accord, and they would have acted accordingly.

On the other hand, what could the chief of press of the Hungarian Legation in Berlin do at the Wilhelmstrasse? Present himself by command every day to Mr. Paul Schmidt⁴⁹ to say what? That the German press must serve the political objectives of the Tripartite Pact? But that is just what we do, Mr. Schmidt would have politely replied, and as no other action was required by protocol, the interview would have come to an abrupt end.

Hungary’s signature on this protocol would have been equivalent to reducing itself to a vassal state *à la* Slovakia. This time, therefore, the government flatly refused. One can easily imagine that this refusal was not received without annoyance. The Germans raised the subject several more times, adding more threats to their expressions of dismay. But Budapest held firm to the end, that is, until the occupation of the country. It was only then that the Germans achieved their objective, and rather quickly, too, by simply suppressing any item in the press deemed to be leftist. With the removal of this last obstacle, Hungary was at last completely “aligned”.

HUNGARY'S LAST INDEPENDENT DIPLOMATIC ACT: THE HUNGARIAN-YUGOSLAV TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP. THE DEATH OF COUNT CSÁKY

Meanwhile, the Hungarian press commented on the country's adoption of the terms of the Tripartite Pact with approval or with indifference, each newspaper according to its political leanings, but all, even those of the extreme right, highlighted the peaceful character of a mission accomplished. Indeed, the Hungarian people would not have tolerated any warlike unrest, as they were persuaded, even at that stage of the war, that it would somehow be possible to stay out of the carnage. They interpreted as a good sign the fact that England and its allies had not severed diplomatic relations with Hungary. All in all, the vast majority of the Hungarian population had almost unlimited confidence in the political skill of Pál Teleki; thus they cherished the hope that despite all the difficulties, the government would find a way to steer the nation's ship to a safe haven.

The optimism of the Hungarian public was soon confirmed by the increasingly warm relations that had been developing between Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Without a doubt, Hungarian sympathy for Yugoslavia had existed for some time. Yugoslavia, or the Serb-Croat-Slovene State as it was then known, benefited from vast territorial gains from Hungary after the First World War. Although these gains included approximately half a million ethnic Magyars, Hungarians never felt hate for this country. First of all, more than half the Yugoslav population—we speak here only of the Croats and the Slovenes—fought on the side of the Central Powers during the First World War. Even the Serbs, who were on the opposite side, earned the respect of the Hungarians for their indisputable heroism. Just a few years after the war, in 1926, Regent Horthy made clear his sentiments in a speech given at Mohács at the 400th anniversary of the disastrous battle near this town, where the Ottoman armies, after sweeping aside the Serbs, broke the resistance of Hungary, the last bulwark of Christianity. The Regent revived the shared interests that had linked these two warring peoples in the past and observed that the future could again bring forth common duties and goals. This speech had a positive effect on the Serbian leadership in Belgrade, but Italy, wanting to safeguard its position in South East Europe,

did not want any accords of this kind and made such advances to Hungary in its turn that this small and isolated nation decided it was preferable to gravitate towards Rome.

From then on, Rome and Budapest pursued a common policy towards Yugoslavia. Sometimes they benefited from this country's internal problems, from the conflict between Serbs and Croats; sometimes they encouraged Belgrade's suspicions against the increasingly bold advances of Hitler's Reich. It was all done according to the ups and downs of the great European political game. It may not have been very laudable, but it was fair enough, and the others did as much. When in March 1938, the Anschluss became a reality, the presence of Germany on the Yugoslav border prevailed over all other considerations. Indeed, Rome and Budapest had great interest in preventing their new and powerful neighbour from gathering up this entire country in its net, thus from that point on they abandoned all pretence of dividing up Yugoslavia, in order to pursue a policy of open friendship. Hungary in particular took the lead in this direction because the danger of having Germany, too, on its back was for the Hungarian nation, given its weakness, more acute than for Italy.

Naturally Germany did nothing to encourage Hungarian-Yugoslav amity, but as now Italy was one of its favourites and as the German war machine was too busy elsewhere, the Reich preferred not to take exception. Besides, the time had not yet come for Germany to absorb the Balkans; thus German diplomacy let the puppets amuse themselves as they pleased. Manifestations of friendship between Budapest and Belgrade multiplied without meeting any obstacles. But then, all of a sudden, Hungarian membership of the Tripartite Pact brought to the fore the question: *Quid nunc?*

"*Quid nunc*—what to do now?" was the question posed by the Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, who on hearing the news of the signing of the Pact, already in disrepute, rushed to Budapest to see Count Csáky, who had just come back from Vienna. "Is my mission to Belgrade to end with that?" he said to his Foreign Minister in a fearful tone of voice. "It is only now that it will begin," replied Count Csáky, and straight away he explained his plans concerning Yugoslavia. Here are the thoughts of Csáky: from the Hungarian point of view, Yugoslavia had for some time constituted a sort of counterweight to Germany. Not in the sense of an ordinary political alliance, of course; even to think in such terms would be

dangerous vis-à-vis Germany, but in an indirect sense, in the hope that a Yugoslavia that does not feel threatened by Hungary would have no need to follow the example of Romania in relying on Hitler to hold Hungary in check. From this example, Hungary's and Yugoslavia's mutual interests became evident, because a basic solidarity existed in this region between all the small countries that did not wish to submit completely to Germany. We would therefore have every advantage in formalizing the friendly relations already being established on this basis between the two countries. However there is also another consideration: due to Mussolini's attack on Greece, war was already underway in the Balkans. One could assume with certainty that Bulgaria would not hesitate to take advantage of the circumstances and occupy Macedonia and perhaps even additional territories. Romanian policy was almost completely dominated by hate towards Hungary, and hatred, as we know, is a poor counsellor. There were but two nations in this region that for the moment asked only to be left in peace: Hungary and Yugoslavia. Thus, they had every interest in shaking hands and agreeing on the pursuit of a wise and prudent policy that would allow them to maintain peace in South-East Europe, formerly so turbulent. Italy has already been won over to this project, so if we succeed in dispelling German suspicions, nothing would prevent us from reaching an agreement, provided that Yugoslavia, too, was amenable.

With Germany consenting and Yugoslavia also being in agreement, Count Csáky, at the head of a sizeable delegation, visited Belgrade barely three weeks after Hungary had joined the Tripartite Pact, to affix his signature to the Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact, stipulating "*eternal peace and everlasting friendship*" between the two countries. The Hungarian people rejoiced once again; they felt liberated from oppression and exhilarated at not having been mistaken about the government of Pál Teleki. The faint hope of an independent political act became reality. It seemed Hungary's leaders still held the cards and were in the game!

The reception of the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade was most cordial, not only on the part of the official personnel, but by ordinary people as well, which in itself showed the excellent attitude of the Yugoslav government and the Yugoslav people towards the Pact about to be signed. At the signing ceremony the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs reiterated the peaceful character of the Pact and the following evening, during the gala banquet offered by Cincar-Marković⁵⁰ for his Hungarian

guests, warm speeches were given, in which tributes were paid to the friendship and mutual interests of the two countries and two nations. According to the terms of the agreement, each of the two foreign ministers underlined their desire to conduct foreign affairs in their respective countries in conformity with the peaceful policies, which the Axis powers up to that point practiced in this part of Europe.

Elementary caution required that the two powers of the Axis should be mentioned by the representatives of the contracting parties to ease the sensibilities of the always-suspicious Germany, and to pay tribute to Italian policy favourable to both countries. Besides, the two governments were perfectly aware of the dangers that surrounded them, so it was agreed that in the event of an emergency they would not fail to confer with each other on the coordination of their policies.

The question of Hungarian territorial claims did not arise in Belgrade, but care was taken to draw up the Pact in such a way that Hungarian recognition of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity was omitted. It was tacitly accepted to let this question rest until an opportune occasion permitted an amicable resolution in the future. Everything seemed to be going well, and Count Csáky could leave the capital of Yugoslavia feeling he had done a good deed. Before returning to Budapest, he was invited by Prince Paul of Yugoslavia⁵¹ to hunt chamois in the mountains of Slovenia. A week later, close to death, Count István Csáky was brought to Hungary, and barely a month later⁵² he died in a clinic in the capital. His successor was László Bárdossy.



PART TWO

ON THE FRINGES OF THE BÁRDOSSY TRIAL A POSTHUMOUS TESTIMONIAL

INTRODUCTION

The trial of László Bárdossy, former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, designated “Hungary’s War Criminal Number One” came to an end. Having been found guilty by the People’s Tribunal, he was condemned to death and executed. Judgement had been discharged and the Bárdossy file closed. But the day will come when all the war files, closed or not, as well as all the actors in this tragedy, be they the accusers or the accused, the culpable or the victims, the leaders or the supporters, will reappear before the great Court of Appeal of History, which, unswayed by passion, will pronounce in an atmosphere of philosophical serenity its final verdict on the men and the events, on the causes and the effects.

At this trial, László Bárdossy will surely reappear in the dock as a defendant with very little hope of escaping condemnation. But he will not be alone, and more likely than not, he will not even be the principal defendant. On the contrary, there will be many defendants both before and after him, all of whom must answer, either for the lost war or the failed peace, all the sowers of discord and forgers of reconciliation. Each will take the stand to be interrogated and judged.

In all likelihood I shall no longer be alive when History’s great trial opens. I hereby wish to give my testimony as witness. I shall discharge my task as best I can, without taking sides and especially without regard to anyone or anything, except for the truth. I shall tell the truth, nothing but the truth, but still not *all* the truth, for the complete truth is so vast and so extremely complex that entire libraries will be filled with books dealing with the greatest of all wars, without exhausting either the part made of legend, or, even less likely, all the elements of the “Whole Truth”.

BÁRDOSSY, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Before becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bárdossy was Hungarian Minister to Bucharest, or, to be more precise, not even that, since after the changes in Transylvania, Csáky realized that he would have to replace the Minister in Bucharest; therefore he recalled Bárdossy to the capital. Thus, at the time of Csáky's death Bárdossy was without a post. The reason he was not assigned a post earlier was that he had married a woman who, while perfectly respectable, was a divorcée, and for that reason they were married in a civil ceremony, which did not please everyone. In fact this is what "earned" him the Bucharest posting; originally he had been selected for London, but since his marriage was not strictly in order, it had not been possible to obtain the approval of the Court of St. James. Since the Romanians were not so particular, Bárdossy ended up in Bucharest. Let us note the misfortune. If Bárdossy had indeed been accredited to London, where he had spent many years as counsellor at the Legation, he would surely have stayed there until the war broke out, and perhaps would still be there. At any rate, as minister in London he could not have become foreign minister in the "New Europe" of the Germans, and had he not been in the government, today he would not be buried with six bullets in his body!

So as I was saying, at the time of Csáky's death, Bárdossy found himself in Budapest without a posting. Thus, when Teleki, having recovered from a state of panic caused by the sudden death of his former secretary and friend, began to search for a successor, almost inevitably the choice fell on Bárdossy, all the more as he was one of the three statesmen who had been nominated by Csáky himself as his possible successor. Teleki therefore contacted Bárdossy who, according to all expectations, should have made a fine foreign minister. He was a seasoned professional with extensive diplomatic experience, acquired as Chief of Press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then as a counsellor in London and finally as Minister in Bucharest, which for a Hungarian was not an easy post at this time. In addition, he was cultivated, fluent in the most important foreign languages, a man of the world, good company, and to boot, distinguished in appearance. But above all, what made Teleki decide in Bárdossy's favour was that he would start with a clean slate. Having never taken part in Hungary's political life, he had no enemies, which is always a big plus for any head of government;

in addition, being a diplomat, he had never taken a position either for or against the Germans. For all these reasons, Teleki believed that he could offer him the portfolio of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a clear conscience without instantly provoking the suspicions of one or the other of the opposite camps. Teleki intended to direct external affairs himself and Bárdossy appeared to be exactly the right person to follow his directives, as he lacked the obstinacy and mood swings of his predecessor.

If Teleki was mistaken in all this, he was in good company; Count István Bethlen and he were in complete agreement on the subject of the new Minister of Foreign Affairs. I remember very clearly that hardly one month after the nomination of Bárdossy, Count Bethlen explained to me at length how pleased he was at Teleki's choice, for while Csáky had been too involved with the Germans, everything led one to believe that the new Minister would adopt a more reserved attitude. Moreover, the assumption that he was not (as of yet) the Germans' man was confirmed by German diplomats themselves, who expressed no joy at the news of his nomination. Their watchword was the well-known precept of their British adversaries: "*Wait and see.*"

A VISIT TO HITLER AND RIBBENTROP

They did not have to wait long. Bárdossy's first official visit to Germany in March 1941 gave them an opportunity to put Bárdossy to the test. He did not yet know Hitler and had met Ribbentrop only once, in Vienna during the arbitration, which he had attended. This time the Germans chose Munich as the meeting place. The programme had been arranged before his departure and here are the various items of the schedule: arrival in the morning and immediately thereafter, a conference with the Foreign Minister of the Reich at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, followed by luncheon in the same hotel. After luncheon, a meeting with Hitler at the *Braunes Haus*.¹ In the evening, theatre with supper during the intermission. Departure the following morning. It was agreed that there would be no conference at the luncheon; only Ribbentrop would say a few words of welcome, to which our Minister would respond with a few spontaneous words of thanks. One can therefore easily imagine our astonishment (I say *our* because I made the journey as chief of press) when the Germans—seconds after the door

to Ribbentrop's suite closed behind Bárdossy—handed us the text of the speech their Minister was going to deliver at the luncheon. The speech was three typed pages long, and we were to draft the response of our Minister while he was in conference with his German colleague. Our astonishment only grew upon reading the speech, because Hungary was mentioned at least ten times in the text as an *ally* of the Reich. There was no way to consult Bárdossy at this point, for as the programme indicated, luncheon was to directly follow the conference of the two ministers. There were three of us there to solve the problem: Ghyczy,* Bartheldy** and myself. We understood immediately that the Germans had just lured us into one of their usual traps. They wanted to make it obvious that Hungary's membership of the Tripartite Pact was real and tantamount to an *alliance* with the Axis, and that this fact should be confirmed publicly by the Hungarian Foreign Minister. Since, however, they were still suspicious of Bárdossy, they arranged the details of the schedule in such a way that we, Bárdossy's companions, were obliged to draft his response. Because they supposed that we would never dare say *less* than the Führer's Minister of Foreign Affairs. But we dared anyway. I proposed to Ghyczy, our senior, the following: "If Ribbentrop refers to Hungary in ten different passages as an ally of the Reich, it is not so that our Minister misunderstands. Nevertheless, we cannot consider ourselves to be the allies of belligerents simply because we have adhered to the Tripartite Pact, intended, according to its text, to assure 'world peace'. Yet if the word 'ally' is completely missing in our response, there will be a scandal, which our government, especially Teleki, wants to avoid. Let us mention it just once and speak of Germany as 'our old ally in the Great War'. This way, the Germans will retain the word 'ally', but for the world it will be obvious that we are only confirming a historical fact from the war of 1914–1918. If that displeases Ribbentrop, too bad, there is nothing more we can say." Ghyczy agreed and drafted Bárdossy's speech, in such terms,

* Jenő Ghyczy (1893–1982). At this time political director; later appointed Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From August 1943 until the occupation of Hungary by the Germans on March 19, 1944, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kállay cabinet.

** Tibor Bartheldy (?–1969). Chief of Staff of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and later head of personnel at the Ministry.

with remarkable speed. We handed it to him just before being seated at the table. We barely had time to explain that the Germans had laid a trap, which we sidestepped. After Ribbentrop's speech, he would only have to take the text out of his pocket and read it out loud.

I hardly need mention that Bárdossy put on a martyred look when his German colleague rose and soon "allies" kept pouring from his mouth. He looked at us as if crucified. When our host finished, he pulled with a trembling hand the text from his pocket and started to read, his voice hesitant at first but growing firmer as he went along. To say that his partner was delighted by this would be a lie; on the contrary, during the speech he showed every imaginable sign of nervousness, not missing an opportunity to give us furious looks across the table. But then he seemed to take it in his stride, and when our Minister, having read his response, sat back in his chair, Ribbentrop immediately began conversing in an indifferent tone of voice about everything except politics. He no doubt reckoned that very soon he would find a way of reminding the Hungarian government that our country had become, despite everything, an "ally" of the German Reich.

In the afternoon during Bárdossy's meeting with Hitler, we were served tea in the grand salon in front of the office of the Führer. Each one of us was assigned a German companion to have a chat with; it is likely that after our departure the Germans would have to carefully report what they had heard. As I had never had a liking for this sort of entertainment, I preferred to go up to the second floor to my German "colleague", the chief of press Otto Dietrich.² He was not nasty by nature and he wished me no harm, at least not yet, although he never stopped airing his grievances against the Hungarian press. This time, however, he said nothing disagreeable; instead, I found him in an excellent mood, which must have been because at the moment things were going well in the best of all Reichs. Soon I was called to the salon where we were going to be introduced to the Führer. This was the second time I was subjected to this introduction; the first was in Berlin, in May 1939, when I accompanied Teleki.

Hitler, too, was in a good mood. He even deigned to joke with us after the introductions; alluding to the fine weather we were having, he announced with a particular gleam in his eyes that the spring was going to be exceptionally "hot".

That evening, after the theatre, we had time to review the events of the day; but first of all, we took precautions to neutralize the effect of the microphones, which the Germans had certainly not missed putting in our rooms. That is when Bárdossy revealed to us that neither Hitler nor his Foreign Minister had said anything the least bit positive to him. The latter delivered a long speech of propaganda about the invincibility of Germany, going as far as saying that his country had already *de facto* won the war and that the next phase will consist of the *process of liquidation*. We wondered how this was all linked to the Führer's forecast of an "exceptionally hot" spring. Meanwhile, it was obvious that Ribbentrop had been feeding us tall tales, and we had a strong feeling that this time his boss had spoken the truth.

After that, one could ask oneself what had been the purpose of our visit and what role had the Germans had in mind for us to play? We all thought that all they had wanted, for the moment at least, was a public confirmation on our part of *the reality of the alliance between Hungary and Germany*. The fact that we turned a deaf ear did slightly upset their plans, without however putting them off entirely, so it could only be to our advantage to remain vigilant. And it may be said that we did not have to wait until the month was out for Bárdossy, warned though he was well in advance, to fall straight into their trap. Unfortunately, Hitler had every reason to announce that spring would be "exceptionally hot". Indeed this *Hitlerian* spring heat wave was of such intensity that Hungary was unable to protect itself from it.

HUNGARY BECOMES THE "ALLY" OF THE REICH. WAR WITH YUGOSLAVIA. TELEKI'S SUICIDE. BÁRDOSSY PRIME MINISTER

The ordeal which suddenly was upon Hungary like a bolt out of the blue came in the form of the revolutionary uprising in Belgrade, which on March 27 deposed the Prince-Regent Paul and the entire Cvetković government.³ The events leading up to this revolution are well known, so all we need here is a brief summary:

Mussolini attacked Greece in October 1940, and the Greeks, against all expectations, soundly defeated the Fascists. However, as it was foreseeable that Mussolini would ultimately defeat the brave Greeks, a British contingent

settled in Greece to protect them. This profoundly upset Hitler, who did not want to see the British on the Continent, so he decided to clamp down to prevent Athens from becoming a second Salonika. But if there was one thing that the Nazi dictator learned about strategy, it was not to leave his rear unprotected. Yet in the campaign in Greece, his rear was Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. There was nothing to fear from Bulgaria; therefore the Führer's attention was focused on Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavia of Prince Paul would certainly have not done anything to embarrass Germany, but perhaps they would also not have done anything to prevent a British landing on the Dalmatian coast, which would have seriously endangered the defence of the German troops. There was also the question of the passage of the troops through Yugoslavia, which at a pinch could have been avoided, but Hitler saw no need to agree to such a sacrifice. Let this two-faced country just vanish!—he decided. Ribbentrop found the procedure too vulgar, so he strove to persuade his master to grant Yugoslavia a period of grace. If during this period, which would not last long, Belgrade would solemnly side with the Axis, then there would be no reason to wring its neck. The Führer let his Minister get on with it, and he did so well that by the end of a fortnight the government of Belgrade, seeing that all its tears and cries were to no avail ended up joining the Tripartite Pact just like Hungary and Romania. Prime Minister Cvetković and Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković were summoned to Vienna for the signature. The ceremony took place in a gloomy atmosphere, and on the return journey, when their special train made a stopover in Budapest, Prime Minister Cvetković told the representative of the Hungarian government, who had come to greet him at the station, that he had a very bad premonition about their reception in Belgrade. Indeed the premonition was not mistaken; the following day he was ousted as Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia as it was reconstituted after the revolution had very little in common with the Yugoslavia of Prince Paul. Overnight, adherence to the Tripartite Pact was devoid of meaning, although it was never officially renounced. Indeed, in Yugoslavia there was not a single person naive enough to believe that a revolution and the ousting of a regime were necessary simply to continue the same policies that had caused the upheaval in the first place. Hitler, it goes without saying, did not believe it either; he therefore did not hesitate to issue orders to teach this recalcitrant country a lesson at the earliest possible time.

It is at this point that Hungary entered into the affair, if only because Germany could not attack Yugoslavia without at least the passive participation of the country. Even if the principal assault had to penetrate through Romania, as was indeed the case, to get there the route had to inevitably pass through Hungarian territory. It was hardly possible to suggest to the German General Staff that they steer their attack through Austria, already German, and through the mountains of Slovenia, to reach Belgrade just in time for New Years' Eve! Hitler could not afford to lose time, for as we know today, the plans for the campaign against Russia were already underway, and the start of the great offensive was delayed only to allow time to finish off the Balkan campaign. Thus, the rapid and complete success of this campaign was of the utmost importance for the master of the Third Reich; he was in no mood to be restrained by any obstacle whatsoever.

One of his first steps was to put the Hungarian Minister in Berlin on one of his personal aeroplanes and send him to Budapest with the following message addressed to the Regent and the Hungarian government:

Yugoslavia will be wiped out (*"Jugoslawien wird vernichtet"*), because it has just now publicly withdrawn from the policy of alliance with the Axis. The greater part of the German army must pass through Hungary. But the principal attack will not come from the Hungarian sector. Here the Hungarian army will have to intervene and, for its cooperation, it will be able to redeem all of its former territories, which it had in the past been obliged to concede to Yugoslavia. The matter is urgent. An affirmative response is required immediately.

At least this was clear, and the intentions of the Führer were impossible to mistake. An immediate decision had to be made and its consequences suffered. These consequences, however, could only be adverse, whatever the outcome. Because what solutions were available to the Hungarian government?

Solution A—Refuse everything: the passage of German troops through Hungary as well as Hungarian participation in Germany's operation in the Balkans, affirming that our country's hands are tied by the recently ratified

Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact. The consequences of such a heroic act would have been the following: German occupation of Hungary would have been accomplished on March 29 or 30, 1941, rather than on March 19, 1944—three years earlier, in other words. And there is no reason to suppose that the German army would have met with greater difficulties in 1941 than in 1944. Once Hungary became a German ally, the Hungarian army, or what would have remained of it after the elimination of its anti-Nazi officers could not have been content with the occupation of former Hungarian territories, and even after the end of Yugoslav resistance, it would have been expected to participate in German army operations in the former Serbia, and possibly even further afield. Furthermore the economic exploitation of Hungary, implemented by the Germans three years later would certainly have begun from the onset of the Balkan campaign, greatly benefiting the German war effort. What is more, Hungary would have aided Hitler in all his subsequent war efforts, with all its military and economic forces, without the possibility of sabotage as it had done under the wise leadership of Kállay. Far from saving Yugoslavia, such an attitude of the Hungarian government would have caused the Allies, as a group, considerable disadvantages. By the way, let us add that the deportation of the Jews would also have been brought forward by three years and their extermination carried out even more radically. Only one country might have benefited from a refusal by the Hungarian government: *Hungary itself*. Because if the Regent and the legal government had been, as a consequence of their refusal, deposed by the Germans, and especially if they had been able to leave the country, it would have been possible to maintain abroad the fiction of a constitutional Hungary as opposed to a submissive Hungary, and that would have opened up possibilities for the future. Obviously, it would be difficult to imagine that the Regent and his government in exile would today be in a more enviable position than King Peter of Yugoslavia and his loyalists, but in the end, Hungary would at present have more to its credit than the suicide of its Prime Minister. But since this is the way it is, the Hungarian people have the indisputable right to reproach the men who were then in power—Bárdossy and the others—for not having predicted the future and not having acted accordingly, but it makes no sense that the Allies, who did not suffer at all as a result of the attitude of the Hungarian government, felt an indignation not muted to this day.

Solution B—Grant everything: passage and participation in the Balkan campaign, just as Hitler wanted. The ultimate consequence of such an attitude regarding the conduct of the war would have been, generally speaking, the same as for *Solution A*. Only the Germans would not have needed to eliminate the protesting ministers and officers; they would have left of their own accord. And those who would have succeeded in escaping abroad would probably have formed a government, a committee, or whatever else they wanted. In Hungary there would be even more trials today, and the principal defendant would not be Bárdossy.

Solution C—Finally, the path chosen, grant what the Germans would have taken anyway and refuse anything that could be prevented: the solution, which seemed at the time the best for saving the country from disaster, but was in reality the most unfortunate, as I shall endeavour to establish below.

It must be acknowledged that Bárdossy opposed the Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact from the beginning. I can even reiterate almost in its entirety his opinion on this matter, just as he communicated it to me immediately after having assumed the office of foreign minister. “My predecessor [Csáky],” he explained, “will answer before History for this ill-considered act. I admit that his intentions were the best, but he should have understood that in the present situation it was very dangerous for Hungary to take on such obligations. Because ‘eternal peace and everlasting friendship’ mean to me, even in the worst case, *sustainable* peace and friendship. Yet, today, the powers of the Axis reign as sovereigns over this part of Europe. Keeping the peace in our sector therefore depends entirely on them. If events—and this is not at all inconceivable—take a turn contrary to the stipulations of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact, and if by consequence we had to choose between Germany and Yugoslavia, what would we do? Let ourselves be crushed for ‘eternal peace’ which we would not be able to save in any case? When Teleki offered me the post of foreign minister, this was my only objection, and he, though a fervent supporter of friendship between the two countries, shared my concern to a certain extent. He even confessed to me that it was Csáky who had urged him to conclude this treaty immediately after our adhesion to the Tripartite Pact, but once the document was signed, all we had to do was ratify it, hoping that with God’s help we might be able to avoid any major complications.”

These last events gave Bárdossy a bitter satisfaction, and he who had condemned the Hungarian–Yugoslav Pact *before* the Belgrade uprising, obviously did not show any eagerness to defend it *after* the upheaval. Faced with Hitler's ultimatum—for that's what it really was—he presented his well-known opinion to the Crown Council, the gist of which was that Hungary had no way of opposing Germany. As he explained, no state had the right to sacrifice itself; and in the present case this became even more self-evident, as it was Yugoslavia that had, in overthrowing its regime, veered from the line of conduct, which formed the very foundation of the Pact. We must therefore observe it, but only as far as it is compatible with our vital interests.

Teleki proposed to explain to Hitler that after all Hungary must consider itself to be tied to the Pact, which had not been renounced by Yugoslavia. We must therefore implore the Führer not to insist on the passage of his troops and to understand that in any case we are bound to protect our ethnic brothers in the former Hungarian territories. (Teleki himself understood that it was impossible for Hungary, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, to forego our former territories and to abandon more than half a million pure Magyars to the mercy of Nazi soldiery. To avoid the danger of the passage of German troops, he made one last attempt to obtain Mussolini's help, but his plea was met with an unambiguous refusal.)

In any case, it was too late, as the Chief of the General Staff, behind the government's back, had already worked out the details of the passage of troops with the German High Command. The news of this act, which Teleki quite rightly qualified as treason, put him into a state of indescribable fury. But having returned to his senses, he understood that if at that moment he took up the gauntlet thrown down by General Werth (himself of German origin),⁴ he would provide Germany and its Hungarian vassals with an easy triumph. Gritting his teeth, he consented to the passage of troops without wanting to undertake any future commitments.

Such was the situation when, on the evening of April 2, a decrypted cable from the Hungarian Minister in London, György Barcza,⁵ informed Bárdossy that he had been summoned to the *Foreign Office* where Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden⁶ had expressed the deep disappointment of His Britannic Majesty's Government regarding the conduct which, by all appearances, Hungary proposed to follow in the Yugoslav affair. Mr. Eden

added that should Hungary participate in this German aggression, it would have to count on a *declaration of war* from England.

It was this telegram that finally drove Teleki to his grave. Indeed, after all he had done to frustrate the designs of the Nazis on Hungary, without having received even a simple promise of support from England, now that he was grappling with the worst of difficulties, betrayed even by his own people, it was impossible for him to bear the thought that the only message sent to him from London was the threat of declaration of war!

I saw him that same evening. I called on Bárdossy around 9 o'clock, before leaving the Ministry, and found Teleki with him. He was pacing back and forth in the room without saying a word, head bowed, hands in his pockets. Bárdossy, too, was silent. On his desk I noticed the decrypted cable from London. I read it and understood everything. After a few minutes, I heard Teleki say, as if to himself: "I did everything I could; I can do no more." Then he added: "I will leave then." He left the room. The porter handed him his overcoat. I accompanied him to his car. "Good night, your Excellency," I said. He did not reply at first, but as his car began to move away, he pulled himself together to respond: "Good night." Those were the last words I heard him utter. That night, alone in his presidential apartment, he blew out his brains...

Before dying he wrote to the Regent.⁷ I have not seen this letter, but it is not necessary for me to be informed of its contents to know why Teleki killed himself.

He died because he had not been able to prevent Hungary's cooperation with Hitler against Yugoslavia. This cooperation, despite its limited scope, and even though Yugoslavia had itself provoked Germany, ran counter to the signed and ratified Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact. How severely would the Anglo-Saxon world judge Hungary's attitude; and what effect would this attitude have on Hungarian-Yugoslav relations, the latter being very important to Teleki. The answers to these questions were contained in that fateful cable from London. Simply to resign under these circumstances appeared to him too feeble. To step aside, having proved himself incapable of saving his country, was not worthy of him. By killing himself whilst still in full control of his duties, he wanted to say to Yugoslavia that not having been able to deter the aggressors from attacking a friendly country, at least he wanted to be the first to fall in the field of battle. And he intended to

make the English understand that in the present terrible predicament of his country, being at the mercy of Germany, abandoned by all, there was but one possible solution: an honourable death. Finally, he wanted to show his own people that honour was more precious than life itself!

His death plunged the country into unimaginable panic and grief. The press office of the Prime Minister produced a confused explanation for the suicide, but people had enough sense to understand the meaning of this noble gesture without, or rather despite, official communiqués. The shot fired in the Sándor Palace resonated throughout the country, terrifying all right-thinking patriots. How bad could things be, they asked, if a man as conscientious and profoundly religious as Teleki could find no solution other than suicide? Indeed, the true state of affairs became clear that same day, since at the very moment of Teleki's suicide, the German army was preparing to cross the Hungarian frontier. The hastily convened Crown Council decided to dispatch the Minister of War to Hitler to explain to him on behalf of the Regent that faced with Teleki's sudden death the Hungarian army found it impossible to begin operations as long as Yugoslavia existed as a state. But even after the disappearance of Yugoslavia as a state, Hungarian troops would limit their activities to the occupation of former Hungarian territories, and not follow the Wehrmacht in its operations on Serbian soil and beyond. In his response to General Bartha,⁸ Hitler stated that he did not understand all this oversensitivity, but would take note of our decision, adding however that it would be to Hungary's advantage not to delay its intervention for too long.

This is what I called *Solution C* above. Why were these consequences so disastrous? Simply put, this solution satisfied no one, not Yugoslavia, not Hungary, not England, or the Hungarian people, not even Germany.

Despite some undeniable evidence of consideration on Hungary's part, and though the Hungarian government had declared that they were not at war with it, Yugoslavia became the irreconcilable enemy of its former friend, as if the latter had thrown itself totally and unconditionally into the arms of Germany.

England condemned Hungary and broke off diplomatic relations on April 7, 1941. True, it did not yet go as far as a declaration of war, but it was obvious that this would not be long in coming, because if a Teleki could

not put up any resistance against Germany, there was not much hope of success for anyone else. The inevitable was bound to come to pass.

As to the effect all this had on the Hungarian people—apart from a few featherbrains and Nazi agents—one only had to live in Hungary during those days to witness the gloomy atmosphere in which the reoccupation of these long-coveted territories were carried out. We in Hungary have always been very sensitive to the matter of honour. Only the powerful can afford to pay more attention to their interests than to their honour, if only because they always carry more weight in the international realm to defend their cause, come what may. Whereas for the small, the weak, honour is the greatest capital, often the only one; thus they must guard it very zealously, unless they happen to have powerful defenders on whom they can count.

Hungary always lacked such powerful defenders, and even Germany bore it a grudge for its hesitation, so much so that one could be certain that next time it would allow no way out. Besides, to demonstrate his dissatisfaction with Hungary, Hitler occupied the Bánát⁹ (former Hungarian territory) with his own troops.

To top it all, Teleki was no more, and his successor was, once again Bárdossy!

Was there no way of finding anyone else? The truth of the matter is that no one even bothered to look, for the simple reason that it appeared impossible to name a successor to Teleki, whose orientation was already known. The Regent would not hear of a politician sympathizing with the Axis, so as not to sink even further into the German alliance; on the other hand, to choose someone from the opposite side would have been too risky after all that had happened. It would make more sense therefore to choose the Minister of Foreign Affairs who, despite his less than courageous stance during the Yugoslav affair, was deemed “unsullied”—a *carte blanche*.

Thus, Bárdossy became Prime Minister, after having been in government service only two months. He was extremely flattered by it. For the first time in his life, he felt really important. He did not fully understand what it meant to be Prime Minister, but he believed that his country needed all of his wisdom and he was ready to give it in spades. Teleki's example did nothing to discourage him; what he understood was that Teleki had killed himself because he wanted to resist the Germans, which had turned out to

be impossible. Let this idealist professor be buried, and then one shall see how a career diplomat copes with the situation!

His first steps were, however, far from brilliant, for the moment soon approached when, after the German Panzers (*Panzerkampfwagen*) crushed the Yugoslav army, he had to act. The Chief of the General Staff was prepared to charge immediately, but Bárdossy still succeeded in convincing the Regent that it would be preferable to wait until the state of Croatia had been formed, because if Croatia existed, then Yugoslavia as such could no longer exist, and then our hands would be free. After Croatia proclaimed its independence on April 10, 1941, the army received orders from the Regent to get into marching formation the following day and to advance to the “millennial frontiers”. (The expression was not well chosen, because the Yugoslavs interpreted it as an annexationist war cry, whereas the Germans assumed that Hungary intended to stop at her “millennial frontiers”.)

Bárdossy, who was not devoid of intelligence, understood that it would be best to undertake this military excursion with minimal resources, in the first instance making use of non-commissioned officers of the constabulary, and with as little fuss as possible. However, General Werth, who had attached little importance to Teleki, was even less disposed to have any esteem for the likes of a Bárdossy. He therefore launched four army corps into territories, which had already been completely evacuated by Yugoslav troops, and then had grandiloquent communiqués published about his military exploits, which in reality never happened.

In the meantime, other “exploits”, which had not figured in the communiqués of the Chief of the General Staff, were made known to the government. These were that the military, operating for the first time without government control, had decided to create order in the territory under their jurisdiction, and, as a first step, took care to “cleansing” the Bácska region of its former Serb combatants, known as *dobrovoljatz*, who had been billeted there after the First World War by the Yugoslav government to the detriment of the native population. It goes without saying that such “cleansing” operations can never take place without violence, abuse and injustice of every sort; they were the seeds that implanted hatred in the neighbouring countries. Since then we have witnessed other “cleansings” a thousand times more cruel, over the course of which entire populations, this time Hungarians, were banished from their ancestral homes; but these

modern acts of vandalism certainly do not exonerate those who, in Bácska in 1941, had so little respect for human rights.

Bárdossy made a feeble approach to the Regent to put a stop to this shameless and useless persecution, but when the Regent, to whom General Werth had already offered his own version of events, made him understand that the civil authorities had no influence in the reoccupied territories, he did not insist any further—a sign of deplorable weakness on the part of a Prime Minister and a very bad omen for the future! Later, when the civil administration was in place, he even seems to have sanctioned the arbitrary removal of these *dobrovoljatz* by having the Hungarians of the Bukovina, Eastern Transylvania, invade their homes.

(Certain Hungarian patriots, worried about not entirely spoiling relations between the Hungarian and Yugoslav peoples, proposed to the Regent and to Bárdossy not to proceed with the reannexation of the Yugoslav territories in question, but to continue to treat them as “occupied territories”. Bárdossy opposed this plan, pointing out two arguments: *firstly*, the Germans would interpret such an attitude as a public admission of Hungarian doubts on the outcome of the war and they would act accordingly; and *secondly*, it would be against the interests of the population to leave these territories under military administration.)

The weakness, even impotence, of Bárdossy vis-à-vis the military came to light in another case in Muraköz (Medjomurje in Serbo-Croatian). This region, situated between Hungary and Croatia, irrigated by the Drava and Mur rivers, Hungarian since the conquest of the country, was assigned to Yugoslavia by the Treaty of Trianon. Of all the territorial losses suffered by Hungary, this was certainly the least painful and the least unfair, since the greater majority of the population there is Croat. Also, over the course of Hungarian-led conversations with Croat politicians, it was understood that, should the matter arise, Hungary would not insist on the retrocession of this territory. However, during the military operations of 1941, the Muraköz fell into the Hungarian sector and was occupied by our troops, all of which at that moment seemed inevitable, given that the Yugoslav garrison had abandoned it. But Bárdossy, recalling the promise made to the Croats at the time, intended to enact a plan to return this land to the Croats. To distract the attention of the Hungarian public, he went so far as to prohibit the press from even mentioning its name, which was not easy because newspapers had naturally mentioned all the localities occupied by

the army. The Muraköz was the only reoccupied territory where the local administration was left intact, but even the mere presence of Hungarian troops seemed to be too much for the Croat population who behaved so aggressively that the military authorities insisted on establishing their own administration. The Prime Minister agreed, but he soon learned, not without surprise, that the local commander had simply announced the reannexation of the region to Hungary. He protested, but since General Werth supported his subordinate, he let it go, for fear of becoming the underdog in this affair. Forced to give way, he then supported the return of the territory of Muraköz to Hungary more resolutely than anyone else. In the end, from the Allies' point of view, and also from the Yugoslav perspective, it made no difference whether this region became—for the time being—part of Hungary or Croatia-Slavonia, but many Hungarians, for whom the sovereignty of historic Hungary was something very close to their heart, watched with growing anxiety the weakness of their Prime Minister when faced with the General, a weakness that began to assume dangerous proportions.

Germany did not fail to realize this either and its future intentions only became more explicit. Soon it would lay hands on the largest windfall.

WAR AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION

Two months later, on June 22, 1941, the Reich attacked its former partner, Soviet Russia. The history leading up to this new German aggression is well known and does not concern us here. What is important from the point of view of our subject is that Hitler did not invite Hungary to participate in this campaign. Even in his famous speech delivered on the day hostilities commenced, in which he mentioned the participation of Finland and Romania alongside Germany, he did not breathe a word about Hungary. Bárdossy appeared delighted and the Hungarian public was relieved too.

It was an outstanding opportunity for the Prime Minister to practice diplomacy and he intended to make the most of it. Did not Foreign Minister Skryabin-Molotov¹⁰ declare to the Hungarian minister in Moscow¹¹—since direct diplomatic relations had meanwhile been reestablished—that if Hungary remained passive, it could count on the Soviet Union to regain all of Transylvania! At first, Bárdossy had even decided not to break off

diplomatic relations with the Soviets; but in order to do this, he had to dispel the suspicions of the Germans who were always ready to discern dark machinations behind independent decisions made by those they called their friends. This is how Bárdossy explained to us, his colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the attitude he proposed to adopt in this matter: “Germany probably expects some spontaneous gesture, a demonstration of our solidarity, but it is in our interest to deal carefully with the Soviet Union. We must, however, act in such a manner that the Reich would not suspect us of anything. Indeed, we must refrain from losing Hitler’s already wavering confidence, because in that case we would be exposed to a whole series of dangers, one of which would be that he would favour Romania to our detriment. Therefore, should Ribbentrop have me questioned why I intend to retain the Legation in a country opposed to Germany, I would respond that this should not cause him any problem; indeed, the opposite is the case, since he could benefit from the precious information we may obtain from our representative in Moscow.”

Such language, although far from being honourable, at least signified that the intention of the Prime Minister was basically to follow an independent political line, which suited us all perfectly. As Chief of Press, I was the first who had to respond to a question addressed to me on this very subject by the correspondent of the German Telegraphic Agency (*Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro*). I said word for word: “The Hungarian government has not considered breaking diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. As Hungary is not participating in the Russian campaign, a break in relations would be a worthless gesture. If your government wishes to know more, the Prime Minister will surely provide a fuller explanation.” An hour later Bárdossy summoned me. I found him in a nervous state of overexcitement, and the moment I entered his office, he told me the following: “You have created a fine mess for me! You declared to the Germans that we have no intention of breaking off relations with the Soviets and as a result, Erdmannsdorff (the German Minister)¹² immediately turned up, demanding an explanation. I told him more or less what I had described to you yesterday, but he retorted sarcastically that Germany had no need of our legation in Moscow, and he would prefer a show of solidarity on our part. A rupture of our diplomatic relations with the Soviets would be, according to Erdmannsdorff, *the least we could do*.” “What did you reply?” I asked without reacting to the reprimand he had just addressed to me. “I

responded that naturally if that was the official position of the Reich, we would be ready to act on it.”

I think it is here that I must interrupt the rendition of our dialogue, because it would be too easy to quote the words to which the only other witness is no longer alive. All the same, I left Bárdossy, having taken note of his firm resolution that *rupture of diplomatic relations with Russia would be the limit of our concessions to Germany*.

This, however, was not to be. The events that unfolded the following days, at an almost frantic pace, will go down in history as the most frightening example of the powerlessness of Hungary before the German Reich. Never before did “the presence of Germany on our borders and in our very country” prove as true as during those sad days of late June 1941!

The affair began on Tuesday, June 24, with an urgent invitation to an emergency meeting of the cabinet. We met at five o’clock and no one knew at this point what was to be discussed. I attended as Chief of Press, but without the right to have a say in the matter to be discussed. Everyone was assembled when the Prime Minister rushed in, white with anger, holding in his hand an envelope which he threw disdainfully on the conference table, after opening the session. “Here is the letter I just received from the Chief of the General Staff,” he said. “Its contents being of the utmost importance, I have insisted on informing my colleagues in the cabinet and on asking for their opinion before responding.”

This letter, which Bárdossy read out straight away, contained a summons from General Werth to declare war, immediately, on the Soviet Union. The outline of his arguments was broadly as follows: there is no doubt that Germany would win the war; the liquidation of Bolshevism, which has now begun, will be the last great battle before final victory. If Hungary stays out of the war, it will be shunted aside when victory comes, and we shall not only have to renounce our subsequent territorial claims forever, but we even risk losing Northern Transylvania, which will be reclaimed by Romania as compensation for its participation in the war. If, on the other hand, we march alongside Hitler, millennial Hungary will certainly be restored in its entirety. There is not a moment to lose, because the more we hesitate, the smaller will be our reward.

It is only natural that during this reading, I was assailed—just as everyone else there most probably—by thoughts taking the form of a response to

General Werth. "It is not for the Chief of the General Staff," I would have told him, "to make suggestions on the conduct of foreign policy. Besides, the starting point of these suggestions is already open to dispute, because it is in no way certain that Hitler will win the war. And if he does not win it, we risk losing everything by having joined forces with him. At any rate, why declare war on Russia against whom we have no territorial claims? How can one say that by associating with Hitler, we are sure to regain all of our former lost territories, whereas Romania, in possession of Southern Transylvania, is already fighting against the Russians? What makes you think that the Führer, just to please us, will punish his own ally whose territorial integrity he himself guaranteed after the Vienna Accord?"

However, the Prime Minister had already started to speak and categorically declared the following: "This letter is an inadmissible interference in the affairs of the government. Besides, it is blindingly obvious that none of his arguments hold up. The intention of the government to stay out of the war is not subject to change. In particular, as far as this war is concerned, *we have no reason to be drawn in. This war is none of our business!* (In Hungarian: *Ebbez a háborúhoz semmi közünk!*)" As he spoke, he banged on the table with his fist. Finally, he invited his colleagues to vote, one after another, *for* or *against* our participation in the Russian war. He was the first to cast his vote, which was AGAINST. After him, all the other cabinet ministers also voted against, with the exception of General Györffy-Bengyel,¹³ sitting in for General Bartha, Minister of War. But even he was almost apologetic for his vote, explaining that he had received an order from his superior to vote for the war, in case the question came up in his absence.

After the vote, Bárdossy called for his secretary to give the following instructions: "Get in touch with General Werth immediately and tell him that I expect him in my office this evening at seven o'clock." Then, turning towards his colleagues he said: "Gentlemen, I will not detain you any longer; the meeting is adjourned..."

When I met him again two days later, we were at war with Russia.

However, on that Tuesday, we were still far from it, or so it appeared to me. After the cabinet meeting, I went to see Ghyczy, our political director, to tell him what had happened at this historic meeting. Both of us were very satisfied to see that our opinion of our leader appeared to have been mistaken; his recent firm attitude undoubtedly deserved our respect. We

again set about taking stock of him, making an analysis of his character and coming to the conclusion that his various signs of weakness, which testified against him, in actual fact must only have been a means of tactical retreat. It is obvious, we said to ourselves, that Bárdossy had not wanted to approve the battle against General Werth, and therefore indirectly against the Germans, before being quite certain not to be caught off guard. Today, for the first time, he holds all the aces, because no Hungarian with any common sense wants this war and, indeed, Bárdossy found all members of his cabinet, including the notorious Germanophiles, behind him. The government's quasi-unanimous vote now enabled him to successfully persist with his refusal to let us get dragged into this war.

The following day, Wednesday, I did not see Bárdossy. The day after, Thursday, June 26, I invited some guests to luncheon on the terrace of the Hotel Carlton. It is important to note the location, because the Carlton is at a distance of five minutes by car from the Ministry, so I was preparing to leave at five minutes to two o'clock to arrive in time for the luncheon. As I was about to leave my office, I heard the ringing of the special telephone, which connected me to the Prime Minister. Bárdossy was on the line and he told me the following: "*Soviet aeroplanes flew over the north of the country this morning and dropped a few bombs. They caused some insignificant damage and one man was wounded. Do what you must to keep this out of the newspapers.*" Although this news surprised me greatly, I found the Prime Minister's instructions perfectly logical. Indeed, if this war was truly *none of our business*, why alarm public opinion with this story about Soviet bombs, dropped—one could suppose—accidentally. I therefore immediately telephoned the president of the Censorship Commission, asking him to take the necessary steps. With that I left. Barely had I arrived at the Carlton, thus a few minutes later, when a houseboy came to tell me that the Prime Minister had just telephoned for me. He left a message asking me to go immediately to the presidency. I sent a deputy, one of the guests at the luncheon, with instructions to explain to Bárdossy that as a host, I had to stay with my guests, some foreign journalists. "Return as soon as possible—I told him—they will keep your lunch."

However my deputy did not have lunch that day. I received his news a few minutes after three o'clock, at the end of our meal. He told me over the telephone that he was still at the presidency where an extraordinary cabinet

meeting had just ended. Then he added: "*The Russians have bombed Kassa; I have the communiqué with me.*" "I am coming immediately," was my only response. I was shattered; I *knew* that misfortune had struck, and this time there seemed to be no way out. I took leave of my guests and jumped into my car. I had barely left the vicinity of the hotel when I was stopped by an air raid alert. The penetrating sound of sirens is always impressive, especially when one does not know that the whole thing is a hoax. To conform to directives, I took refuge in the shelter of one of the houses in Mária Valéria Street,¹⁴ but fifteen minutes later it was all over and I was able to continue driving. My deputy was waiting for me at the presidency with the fatal communiqué in his hand. It was as I had dreaded. It began with the description of a Russian air raid on the town of Kassa (Košice) with details of the victims and the damage. The attack was qualified as "unprovoked aggression". The conclusion: "*Henceforth Hungary considers itself at war with the Soviet Union.*"

At that instant, I entered the Prime Minister's office without being announced. I found him slumped in an armchair; he raised his head and gave me a tired look. I was so wound up that I spoke more to calm myself than to convince him, so today it is impossible for me to recall my words. The only thing I distinctly remember telling him was that I had never before in history seen that one could go from peace to war in *five minutes*. Any other day, Bárdossy would certainly have thrown me out for this impertinence, but on this day he was only able to reply in a listless tone of voice: "What is it you do not understand? That the Russians attacked us or that we responded?" "For heaven's sake," I cried out, "is it certain that it was the Russians?" This is what he replied: "*Once our Chief of Staff, obviously in agreement with the Germans, has ascertained that it was the Russians, and since the Regent believes him, this is the way it is and basta!*" "That is still no reason to declare war," I insisted. "If that is what shocks you," he said, "then give me the communiqué you are holding in your hand," and with that he took a piece of paper and began crossing out the words "Henceforth Hungary considers itself at war with the Soviet Union" to replace it with the following: "*Henceforth a state of war exists between Hungary and the Soviet Union.*" Then he added: "I will say one more thing, after which I don't want to hear any more about the matter. From the moment our military, conniving with the Germans, decided not to let anything deter them from dragging us into this war, as is obviously the case, we could not avoid it,

especially if we consider that Romania is already a belligerent. It took me but *five minutes* to understand that—as you put it—someone else might have taken longer, but the result would have been the same. Thereupon the question arose: is it I who must take responsibility for this war, or must I entrust it to my successor? In my opinion the country will gain nothing from the second solution, because if I step down now, my successor can only be a man chosen by the Germans. Besides, he would certainly do more than I intend to.”

It seemed to me as well that it would be useless to pursue this conversation, because Bárdossy could no longer draw back; it was his fate to always be swept along by events and to be their victim, instead of trying to gain the upper hand or make the best possible of it. In this tragic state of affairs, we others, his “collaborators”, realized that our duty to our country ordained us henceforth to see to it that our country make as few sacrifices as possible for this war which, according to Bárdossy himself, was *not our war* and, better still, to do everything in our power to disengage Hungary from this war at the very first possible opportunity.

The Parliament—as a voting machine—ratified the *fait accompli* in retrospect, but all the same, it was not a war like others. First of all, on the Hungarian side, there was no objective for the war: on the contrary, the government hastened to declare that Hungary wanted nothing from Russia. And there was no governmental effort to whip up frenzy against this new “enemy”, no patriotic grandiloquent speeches, no organized press campaign, not even a mockery of communism. Naturally enough, the right-wing press became agitated, but the complete lack of a watchword was blindingly obvious to everyone. Finally, and most importantly, there was no mobilization. This time, unlike in early August 1914, Hungary did not go through troubled days when all middle-class life came to a standstill, as if by magic, to disintegrate into the formidable war machine of an armed nation. Only the Kassa army unit was called to arms and quietly dispatched to the front to occupy the sector designated by the German High Command. Later, an exhibition entitled “Anti-Bolshevik” opened in Budapest under the direction of a member of the governing party, but due to the lack of propaganda material, they only managed to assemble souvenirs from the first proletarian dictatorship of Béla Kun. That was about it.

WAR AGAINST ENGLAND

In the meantime, autumn 1941 came without the German victory that had been widely predicted in a blaze of publicity. The exhausted Axis troops were preparing to occupy their winter quarters. The “liquidation of the war”, as Ribbentrop put it, seemed to have been prolonged. The Hungarian government was mainly preoccupied with Hitler’s consent to bring back our troops. It was Regent Horthy himself who was instrumental in extracting this concession from the Führer during a visit to his *Hauptquartier*.¹⁵ This was no easy task, as the front was already well advanced, so the Germans were obliged to sacrifice a large number of tanks and a considerable amount of petrol to transport these troops back to Hungary. Finally, the first troops arrived towards the end of October 1941, and some were made to parade down the streets of Budapest so that the people could see with their own eyes that they had indeed returned and were well. One then began to hope against hope that all would progress without too much hassle when, all of a sudden, one misty morning at the end of November, Bárdossy received a visit from Herbert Pell,¹⁶ Minister of the United States, who since the rupture of diplomatic relations with England had been representing British interests in Hungary. Minister Pell was charged with transmitting to the Prime Minister a message from His Majesty’s Government to end their war with the Soviets in eight days. Otherwise England would declare war.

Bárdossy did his best to furnish Pell with details of the government’s effort to bring back the troops from Russia, a retreat that was not far from being a *de facto* end to the hostilities. At the same time, he expressed the fervent desire that the British government should not worsen this already disastrous situation for Hungary by choosing that very moment to declare war. But Minister Pell insisted on an official response in writing. Yet to put this in *writing* would be more complicated, as a written note could eventually be published by the other party with the aim of upsetting the Germans, which would no doubt jeopardize the whole affair. The Prime Minister therefore limited himself to writing that the Hungarians were engaged in an exclusively defensive war against Bolshevism, and he asked Minister Pell to also pass on the explanations he had delivered verbally. Minister Pell promised to do his best, but was unable to hide the fact that there was not much hope, given that these same steps were also being taken

towards the Finnish and Romanian governments—it would therefore be quite unusual for London to treat Hungary better than the others.

Learning what had transpired, I was overwhelmed by an indescribable sadness. It was not hard to foresee that the explanations given by Bárdossy would in no way influence a decision that should already have been rendered invalid. This extraordinary demand that the war be ended in eight days could have no other purpose than to make more acceptable to the Anglo-Saxon public a declaration of war against these three small, distant and abandoned countries. It was at this moment in time that I felt most painfully the tragedy of our situation, which could only lead to a fatal conclusion. I was in despair to see that England, who had not a single enemy among clear-headed Hungarians, but who, on the contrary, had millions of good friends in the country, friends who all wanted its victory, must, by the fatal tangle of alliances, henceforth become our adversary. And, to add to this misfortune, neither of us could any longer change the course of events!

However, I decided to at least try to put up a fight. I therefore went to Esztergom to see the Prince Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Serédi.¹⁷ As he was known to be one of the favourites of Pope Pius XII,¹⁸ I hoped that by his intercession we might gain the Sovereign Pontiff to our cause. It was a question of persuading the Holy Father to entreat the British government to have consideration for unfortunate Hungary, struggling with the cruellest difficulties, and not to worsen its situation by a declaration of war that could only drive it straight into the arms of Germany. I tried hard to convince myself that it was still possible, that the voice of the Vatican asking for peace might carry more weight in London than the solicitations from Moscow—and from Prague—pressing for war.

Cardinal Serédi understood me and immediately went to his desk to compose his letter to the Pope. Half an hour later he gave it to me. I do not feel authorised to reveal its contents, but limit myself to saying that it was admirably well-written, in impeccable Italian, which moved me deeply. After having thanked His Eminence, I went immediately to the Apostolic Delegation in Budapest, to implore the Papal Nuncio¹⁹ to dispatch the letter to the Pope by courier and in the meantime to indicate to His Holiness its contents in a coded telegram. The Nuncio consented to this with a good heart.

I whispered not a word of this initiative to Bárdossy, or to anyone else, and awaited the outcome with bated breath. On December 7, we heard the result. That day, Minister Pell again visited the Prime Minister with the communication that, to his deepest regret, the explanations which he had presented to the English did not carry enough weight to change a decision which had already been made. Thus, a state of war had to be considered as existing from the preceding day, namely December 6, 1941. The United States Minister added that the Finnish and Romanian governments had received the same communication.

This was one of the most distressing hours of our history, and perhaps I felt the effect even more deeply than any of my compatriots. But fate deemed that the wound inflicted would be assuaged by the tender words and admirable devotion of an Englishwoman, daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter of English diplomats, the loyal companion of my life: my wife.²⁰

While some events follow their course, others are brewing; life goes on. War with the English, whether we wanted it or not, was a fact, and we had to present it to the country. This task was incumbent on Bárdossy vis-à-vis Parliament, and on me as far as the press was concerned. The Chamber of Deputies was in its final session before the Christmas holidays. Bárdossy arrived in the afternoon and taking the podium, explained what had happened. The deputies listened in deathly silence. When he finished, they rose and began to sing the *National Anthem*. Some took out their handkerchiefs to wipe away their tears. No one asked to speak and the session was adjourned. The Hungarian Chamber of Deputies ratified the war against England...

However, what sufficed for the Parliament was not enough for the public; a little more needed to be said, and some sort of action needed to be taken so that the Hungarian people would not lose heart and did not look for refuge in Hitler's arms, believing that all was lost elsewhere. At the same time, there must be an attempt to make the English (who never failed to follow our press) understand that we were by no means their enemy, despite all that had happened. Moreover, all this had to be done in such a way as to avoid major complications with the Germans.

It appeared to me that the most urgent matter was to give instructions to the Censorship Committee that they must prevent anyone from fomenting

hatred against England, from insulting and showing disrespect for the King. This move seemed indispensable because it was not difficult to foresee that newspapers on the extreme right, supported by a few so-called governmental institutions that received instructions from the German legation rather than from me, would be certain to unleash a venomous campaign against England. At the same time, I recommended to the section of the press open to my suggestions that they should draw their inspiration—always with great care—from the following considerations: the state of war between us and England was more formal than real, given that there was no dispute between our two countries, nor the probability of an encounter between our two armies. Since this was the case, it would not be in our interest to cut all ties that, over the centuries, had been established between our peoples; we must not worsen the situation by preaching hatred for the English. The Anglo-German conflict was not a Hungarian affair; we have our own problems to contend with.

The liberal press abided by these suggestions; the other journals followed their own inspiration, or that of the Germans, but they were more or less restrained by the censors, or more precisely, by those of their members who would rather not act on Nazi instructions.

WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

After a few hours of relative calm, December 7 arrived: *Pearl Harbour*.²¹ We had no illusions as to the consequences of this disaster, so that when on the afternoon of the 11th Hitler, enraged demon that he was, announced the Axis entry into the war with the United States, we were not at all taken by surprise. However, “not surprised” does not mean “reassured”, because it did not take too much imagination to predict, after all that had happened, that Germany would not allow us to limit ourselves to the role of indifferent spectators in this latest conflict. In any case, Bárdossy wanted this time to be craftier than Hitler and pre-empt the approach of the calamity. But in our less than enviable situation, he found no other way than to make one grand, spontaneous gesture in favour of the Axis, a gesture that would constitute such a *fait accompli* that it would exempt us from doing anything else. This gesture would be to break off diplomatic relations with the United States. Bárdossy forthwith summoned Minister Pell to inform

him of this resolution. The Minister, having listened to him attentively, asked him this one question: “*Does this mean war?*” to which the Prime Minister of Hungary responded in the *negative*. Mr. Pell did not appear to be at all surprised by this gesture of the Hungarian government. Indeed, there was not the slightest sign of ill humour; in fact, he immediately began to settle, with Bárdossy, the details of the Legation’s automobiles. The Prime Minister and the Minister of the United States parted on the best possible terms permissible under the circumstances. After this meeting, Bárdossy appeared relieved, and Minister Pell no less so, as demonstrated by the very conciliatory telegram he sent that very evening to the Department of State concerning the afternoon’s events.

Bárdossy also composed a telegram, recalling the Minister of Hungary²² from his post in Washington. In this telegram, he brought to the attention of the Minister the absolute necessity for all officials to return to Hungary. I had just arrived at the Prime Minister’s office and thus had the opportunity of reading the text before it was dispatched. I then went to Bárdossy to ask him this single question: “Why insist on the return of everybody?” He understood my meaning and right away authorised me to cross out the offending passage.

Next morning, a short notice without commentary appeared in the Hungarian press informing the public of the breaking of relations between Hungary and the United States. The Hungarian public, now used to these sorts of surprises, were almost content that for once it had been possible to get off rather lightly in this affair. They had little time to rejoice.

The following morning, the German chargé d’affaires, Herr Werkmeister²³ (the Minister was in Berlin) and the Italian Minister, the Marquis de Talamo²⁴ had themselves announced at the Prime Minister’s office. The conversation was opened by Herr Werkmeister who gave Bárdossy the following message: the Ministries in Berlin and Rome note with deep disappointment the Hungarian government’s haste to break off diplomatic relations with the United States without consulting its close “allies”, thus giving the impression that for the Hungarian government a simple rupture would be enough to satisfy its obligations towards the principle Powers who were the original signatories of the Tripartite Pact. By its allegiance to the Pact, Hungary committed to give its “allies”, in the event of aggression by a third power, its *full assistance*; and this does not mean merely to break off diplomatic

relations but to *declare war*. This is what all the other member countries will do, despite the bad example set by the Hungarian government. The Axis Powers are not prepared to tolerate that Hungary alone has failed to carry out its duties of solidarity, and they expect the Hungarian government to take the necessary measures before the end of the day.

Bárdossy had struggled as best he could, having supported the point of view that in breaking off diplomatic relations with the United States, the Hungarian government had shown enough proof of solidarity. The government had to take into account that the Hungarian people harboured no feeling of hostility towards the United States, who had never done us wrong; the public would therefore not understand why we should go to war against that country. In addition, the government felt an obligation to consider the Hungarians in America, who numbered more than one million. Going to war with the United States was thus the equivalent of fighting against our own brothers, something we wanted to avoid at all cost.

All of this, of course, had not the slightest effect on the noble representatives of the Axis. Herr Werkmeister warned Bárdossy very seriously not to continue using arguments contrary to the established will of the Axis governments, because the consequences of such an attitude would be disastrous for Hungary. As for the Marquis de Talamo, he recommended that Bárdossy be inspired by the example of his own country, which had not hesitated to show complete solidarity with Germany, although there were considerably more Italians than Hungarians in America. Thereupon they both left, certain that they had won their case. They were not mistaken.

Bárdossy summoned me that afternoon. Arriving at the same time was Ghyczy, who had meanwhile become State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Andor Szentmiklósy, political director.^{***} It was then that the Prime Minister informed us about his enlightening conversation with the representatives of the Axis. Having finished his account, he immediately told us that he saw no possibility of opposing the German-Italian demands.

^{***} Andor Szentmiklósy (1893–1945). Hungarian diplomat, was arrested by the Gestapo following the German occupation of the country in March 1944. He died one year later in the Dachau concentration camp.

Since in the conversation about to take place between us, every single word was of significance, I shall do my best to recount it as it unfolded. The only modification I must make is abbreviating or condensing arguments, as well as deleting unavoidable repetitions and additions that are customary in such discussions.

Ghyczy (speaking first): All this implies is that we are obliged to wage war on the United States because that is what Hitler wants. There must, however, be a limit to our compliance. Does not the Prime Minister believe that time has finally come for us to stand up to the Germans?

Bárdossy: Judge for yourself; you know as much as I do.

Myself: The Germans depend on our adherence to the Tripartite Pact in order to drag us into this war. Yet the protocol of adherence does not define our obligations. Had they indeed been defined, Csáky would have had no need to ask for an interpretation from Ribbentrop. This interpretation was rather benign...

Bárdossy (interrupting me): Did you hear it yourself?

Myself: No.

Bárdossy: Then who did hear it?

Myself: Csáky.

Bárdossy: Then make Csáky rise up from his grave, so he can bear witness to it!

Ghyczy: I admit that Ribbentrop would deny everything today. But we can always advance two arguments. The first being that the United States has not attacked the Axis...

Bárdossy (interrupting): Hitler has characterized the United States as an aggressor, at least as far as Germany is concerned. If we dispute it, there is no point in continuing, for then we would be in conflict with Germany.

Myself: I realize that there is very little more that we can say. Yet even if the United States had attacked Germany, the Pact only obliges us to provide “assistance” to the principal signatories. And this assistance, even if it must be in its “entirety”, does not necessarily imply a declaration of war. You yourself considered that breaking off diplomatic relations constituted sufficient assistance.

Ghyczy and *Szentmiklósy* agree.

Bárdossy: Yes, but the governments of the Axis hold the opposite view. That’s reality. All you have said is perfectly correct in theory, but it gets us nowhere. The only relevant question is the following: Does the Hungarian

government have the right to hand over the entire country to Hitler (for there is no doubt that in the event of a refusal, Hitler in a matter of days will be ruling the country) only to avoid a declaration of war which, in itself, in no way changes our situation? I do not need to remind you that we are already at war with Russia, have been for eight days, and also with England. Why then sacrifice the country just to avoid going to war with one more power? Besides, it is almost a certainty that we shall never actually fight the Americans. It would be as it is with England, just a formal state of war. In our situation, what's important is not to play with words but to do our best to protect our country.

Myself: I maintain that we are under no obligation to put ourselves at war with the United States. If the Prime Minister finds that my theory has no political value, I am ready to defend it in my capacity as a professor of international law.

Bárdossy: I was not expecting that from you. But if we must speak about international law, why not consult the authority, the head of international law at the Ministry? (Turning to Szentmiklósy) Would you please call in Sebestyén?

(A few minutes later Sebestyén appears. Bárdossy explains the case.)

Sebestyén: This is not a legal matter; it is purely political. Our legal obligations do not go as far as war...

Bárdossy: Then I have reached a decision. (He rings his secretary, who enters.) Put me through to the Minister of the United States!

It is perhaps not necessary for me to mention that Minister Pell was thunderstruck when he heard what the Prime Minister of Hungary wanted from him. However, having gathered his wits, it did not take him long to understand that, yet again, Hitler must have intervened in this matter in order to completely reverse the situation from one day to the next. And then, far from losing his temper, his heart filled with compassion for a Hungary shattered under the heel of the Nazi colossus, and with an excess of kindness of which only an American is capable, he expressed his feelings this way: "You must have been subjected to the most terrible German pressure to end up like this." At this moment, Bárdossy, quite agitated at this point, lost his composure. Instead of taking up the thread of conversation so gallantly chosen by the Minister of the United States, he gave him the most tactless and inappropriate response ever recorded in the

annals of diplomacy: “Hungary is an independent state—he shouted—who will allow itself to be commanded by no one.” “Very well—replied Minister Pell—if that is the case, I have nothing more to say. All that remains is for me to ask you to communicate your declaration of war in writing.” He then left, never to return.

After having sent his report to the Regent—who, by the way, had just been taken ill and transported to the Siesta sanatorium—Bárdossy began to carefully compose the diplomatic note which the United States Minister had asked for. As a declaration of war, it was one of a kind. It began by stating that the Tripartite Pact imposes on Hungary an obligation of solidarity towards the principal contracting powers. The rupture of diplomatic relations with the United States was one sign of this solidarity, but the obligation in its entirety includes war. Consequently, Hungary is at war with the United States.

(The American reaction to the “declaration of war”²⁵ merits special mention. The Senate duly noted that “the Government and people of the United States are at war with the Hungarian Government”).

I thought then that Bárdossy had insisted on this famous obligation of solidarity in accordance with the Tripartite Pact to underline that he now had to swallow what others had cooked up before his accession to the premiership. And the instructions he gave to the press, this time personally, stressing that we had only obeyed our treaty obligations, confirmed my supposition.

After this momentous day, I returned to my native Sopron, to join in the joyous commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the plebiscite, won on December 14, 1921, against the Austrians, supported—already then—by the Germans. This plebiscite was the first great battle of my career. How I would have loved to turn back the clock!

During these mid-December days, life was not particularly cheerful in Budapest. One felt pressed and squeezed by the terrible arms of the German octopus, and forecasts for the future became increasingly grim. Only the servants of the Germans seemed to rejoice in the fact that the Reich no longer had a single enemy who was not also ours, but their satisfaction was not at all contagious. The Hotel Ritz, residence of the Minister of the United States, soon became a place of pilgrimage for Hungarian patriots

who, whenever they had the opportunity of catching sight of the Minister, his wife or one of the members of the Legation's staff, gave them a warm ovation. The police, most probably sharing the sentiments of the crowd, did not intervene, and it took a German request to end the situation. In practice, this meant that the Chief of Protocol had to ask Minister Pell to transfer his residence to the Hotel Palatinus, on the enchanting Saint-Margaret Island but still in Budapest—done, according to the official explanation—so that the police could assure the safety of the Minister, given the crowd of foreigners living at the Ritz. A few days later the move was completed. Minister and Mrs. Pell resided at the Hotel Palatinus until their departure, that is, for a few more weeks, surrounded by the deep respect of their many Hungarian friends.

Before their departure, they gave my wife and me their photograph showing them sitting in their spacious drawing-room at the Ritz, with their favourite dog at their feet. Here is the inscription on the photograph: "*With happy remembrances of dear Hungary and the American Legation—Olive Pell—Herbert Pell.*"²⁶

When they left, a huge crowd came to the train station to wish them "Godspeed" and at the same time to bid them "Farewell", although their departure was not announced in the press. An entire compartment was hardly enough to contain the flowers and presents—a striking contrast to the departure of the German Minister and Frau von Erdmannsdorff six months earlier. Although the public had been informed well in advance, only those who had to be there were at the station. And to think that the Minister of Germany, an experienced career diplomat, had left Hungary after a stay of several years, while the Minister of the United States had hardly spent a year in the country. Who then, from the point of view of the Hungarian public, was the *ally* and who was the *enemy*?

Before returning home, the members of the American legation spent a few days in Lisbon. Mrs. Pell made use of her time in the Portuguese capital to organize an exhibition of canvasses painted in Hungary, mostly portraits, among them that of the Regent and Madame Horthy...

IN HITLER'S CLUTCHES. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DEFENSE. BIRTH OF THE RESISTANCE

All this happened openly, for all to see, and the Germans were certainly not the last to notice. They saw clearly that despite all their successes with Bárdossy, and although things appeared to be moving along smoothly enough, they were still far from winning the hearts of the Hungarian people. It was therefore vital to intensify their propaganda.

The overall theme of the reasoning, which spread throughout the press and other outlets submissive to the Nazis, was a variant of well-known arguments adapted to present circumstances. "Hungarians"—they repeatedly asked—"have you finally come to your senses? For you there is no one left but Germany. You have broken away from the rest of the world, or the rest of the world has broken away from you, but the fact remains that the victory of the Reich is your only hope; their defeat would be your destruction. Stop hoping for anything from the other side, because that way you are condemned with no appeal. Therefore throw all you have by way of military and economic forces into the pot on the Reich's side of the scales, adopt its point of view and train of thought, give up your old-fashioned ways, in a word become useful members of the *New Europe* which the victorious sword of the *Führer* is now shaping."

Such was the bait, and the number of those hooked grew visibly. Many who until now had nothing in common with Germany, and even less with Nazism, lost courage and gave in to what they believed to be the inevitable. If, in spite of everything, I can still affirm in good conscience that the majority of the Hungarian people did not hope for a German victory, it is because one really has to admit that these people are blessed with sound common sense and character!

Did Bárdossy believe in the victory of the Reich? It is possible, but as long as he was in power, he never said so. Did he hope for it? It is probable, but he never pronounced Laval's²⁷ famous phrase: "I wish for Germany's victory!" He certainly made himself useful to the Germans in the sense that he did not dare resist them—and with that he undermined, alas, the nation's feeble attempt at resistance—but, on the other hand, he did try to give the Nazi Moloch as little as possible. Besides, he never believed that one must completely give in to Hitler, although he did not conceal

his conviction that there was no hope for Hungary in the Allied camp. Nevertheless, he never stopped others who had different ideas about our possibilities with the Allies from trying their luck; he insisted on one thing only: not to stir up trouble with the Germans. Finally, in all probability, Bárdossy never had a clear enough vision of the accumulation of problems affecting Hungary; the various political questions crossed his mind as if they were so many files, which had to be seen through for some unknown superior. It was only too deplorable that this “superior”, without he himself wishing it, was more often than not Hitler!

Bárdossy was therefore not the man to put a stop to Nazi propaganda in Hungary, although he was not overjoyed at its proliferation. In the face of this state of affairs, I tried—as I had done in my native city of Sopron twenty years earlier—to personally thwart this harmful German offensive. I intervened as follows:

1. I went to István Horthy²⁸ whose election to the position of Vice Regent was already in process, and having explained the situation to him, I suggested that he become the spiritual leader of a vast movement aimed at propagating a national faith, the aim of which would be to thwart vigorously the anti-Hungarian doctrine of the “New Europe”, István agreed to it heartily. Sadly, he died that year.
2. I kindly asked the Prince Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Serédi, to put the full weight of his lofty position on the line, and at the same time instruct his priests to use every possible opportunity to counteract the absorption of Christian Hungary into the “New Europe” of the Nazis. The Cardinal promised his support.
3. Same approach to the Calvinist Bishop, László Ravasz²⁹ and the Lutheran Bishop, Sándor Raffay.³⁰ Same promises of support from both of them.
4. I asked the head of the Franciscan Order to instruct his monks to influence the poorest of the population to make them understand that Nazi propaganda was only an instrument of German imperialism, despite its pretence of standing up for ordinary people.

5. I came to an agreement with Colonel Gyula Kádár,³¹ head of the Bureau of Information and Press at the General Staff and an unfailing patriot, to attempt to convince General Szombathelyi³² the new Chief of the General Staff to make a concentrated effort to purge his services of Nazi elements. We soon understood that General Szombathelyi needed no encouragement in this direction; it was just that he lacked the necessary resources.

(The report on General Szombathelyi sent by Himmler's agents in Hungary to the notorious Gestapo chief is highly significant. This report, of which I possess a copy, is dated March 1, 1943. After enumerating recent grievances against the politics of Prime Minister Kállay, it turns to the Chief of Staff, noting the following: "*And can one believe that General Szombathelyi made a point of reprimanding the director of the newspaper Magyarország for his pro-German attitude? He even dared to tell him that there was reason to rejoice over the recent defeats on the Eastern Front, because these defeats will teach the Germans to be less insolent in the future.*")

6. I agreed with General Újszászy,³³ head of the Centre for State Defence (*Államvédelmi Központ*) to exchange information on the activities of Nazi agents in Hungary.
7. I agreed with Professor Cholnoky,³⁴ President of the "Turanian Society" that the Turanian origins and alliances of the Hungarians should be taught with renewed zeal, to open to the Hungarian public broader horizons than those promised by the "New Europe".
8. With all the means at my disposal, I supported financially both the new *Hungarian Review* and the *Hungarian Quarterly*.
9. I arranged with Deputy Lajos Mezey,³⁵ Chief of the Press Service, and with Deputy Imre Martsekényi,³⁶ director of propaganda for the governing party, to highlight purely Hungarian points of view as opposed to "European" points of view. We have already noted that Hungarian diplomacy had done its best to adapt to German politics of the period. After the first success, as the outcome was then called, won at Vienna, the liquidation of Czechoslovakia, March 1939, offered Hungary a new opportunity to rectify the contested borders of Trianon.

10. I joined the National Veterans' Association³⁷ of which I soon became co-president, with the aim of using this powerful association of half a million members, to secure for the movement of National Renewal a defensive and offensive force should the need arise. Under the protection of this association, I established links to other existing anti-Nazi associations. Naturally, it would have required several years of diligent work, supported by the entire presidency, for my efforts to yield tangible results. (After the German occupation of Hungary, the quisling Sztójay government had me, among other things, expelled from the National Veterans' Association. The entire presidency, having declared solidarity with me, resigned.)
11. I encouraged the anti-Nazi journals in the capital to direct the attention of their readers on specifically Hungarian problems which, by their very existence, would constitute an obstacle to the expansion of "European" propaganda. During a press conference for all the directors of regional newspapers, I persuaded them to follow the same path.
12. It was during the same period that I began, in collaboration with Mr. Szegedy-Maszák,³⁸ political undersecretary, to establish a second diplomatic front composed of a few press attachés and trustworthy journalists whose task was to get in touch with the Allies and act as intermediaries between Hungary and Western public opinion.

I told Bárdossy none of this, but since at least one part of my "anti-European" activity took place in the public domain, it is hardly likely that he was unaware of it. Still, he did nothing to encourage or discourage me.

BLOOD PAYMENT TO GERMANY

Meanwhile Ribbentrop paid us a surprise visit. To gain Hungary's full participation in the great offensive that should have been the last effort of the Reich before Russia was finally crushed, the Führer's Minister came personally to Budapest in early January 1942.³⁹ As I have just noted, his demand was straightforward: he wanted everything—our army in its entirety and all the country's economic resources. Forward march for the

final battle!—he urged—and then an era of great joy will follow! However, this time Bárdossy was on his guard and refused; or more precisely, he did not refuse *everything*; what he did refuse was to offer a *carte blanche*. He explained to Ribbentrop that as long as specifically Hungarian problems remained unresolved, the government could not allow the country to be stripped of all its military and economic resources. To the remark of the German Minister that these “special questions” could be resolved later with the help of the Reich, Bárdossy retorted that this aid had been sadly lacking whenever the question of having to curb anti-Hungarian provocation in Slovakia and in Romania arose. He was ready to contribute to the spring offensive without, however, depriving the country of its means of defence. Ribbentrop was thoroughly displeased and made sure to warn Bárdossy that the Führer would be no less so. Meanwhile, he had to make do with a rather vague promise and left the country, but not before announcing that Marshal Keitel would be arriving the following month.

Wilhelm Keitel⁴⁰ did indeed arrive one month later, surrounded by an imposing retinue of military experts. He immediately got in touch with the Hungarian Chief of Staff to specify the extent of our contribution. It would be almost superfluous to mention that he too began by asking for absolutely everything; but it was not as easy to deal with General Szombathelyi as it had been with his predecessor, so after much haggling, he had to content himself with one-third of the Hungarian armed forces, that is, only one of our armies. It was understood that this army, the second, under the command of General Jány,⁴¹ would arrive at the front with the arms and equipment they already possessed, which were to be supplemented by the Germans before operations began.

Bárdossy found our concessions excessive, but the Chief of Staff assured him that it had been impossible to persuade Keitel to accept less. He again pointed out the advantage of the Germans’ offer to supplement the army’s equipment, which would allow us to keep two intact armies in the country for our own needs.

(I should mention here that when the moment came for the Second Army to depart, the Germans announced that they lacked the necessary military equipment; they therefore asked the Hungarian Chief of Staff to “lend” them the necessary stocks from the First and Third Armies. We, very stupidly, obliged and the Germans, very smartly, never returned anything.)

MASSACRES IN THE BÁCSKA

One misfortune leads to another. Fate decreed that the period between Ribbentrop's departure and Keitel's arrival should be filled with the gravest of incidents: the massacres of Zsablya and Újvidék (Novi Sad).⁴²

We already noted that the spirit of the troops who proceeded with the occupation of the Bácska was not of the best. Nevertheless, after the excesses of the first weeks, the turmoil subsided and a certain stability came to the region. That is to say that this stability would probably have taken hold if the Yugoslav partisans, who operated successfully on the other side of the border, had not chosen to extend their activities into the territories that were now Hungarian. Attacks were therefore perpetrated against Hungarian soldiers, mysterious fires broke out, all in line with the sagacious rules established in the world of partisans. Under these circumstances, the Chief of Staff called for the restoration of order. But in the local commander's dictionary "restoration of order" was equivalent to "clamping down" which, for the subordinate commanders meant eliminating all that could be suspicious. Unfortunately, the execution of these fateful orders was a thousand times worse than the orders themselves, because the soldiers, incited in advance by young Nazi officers, began, in two localities, Zsablya and especially Újvidék, a pell-mell massacre of Serbs, Jews, Germans and even, by mistake, a few Hungarians as well. The number of victims rose to over 3,000,⁴³ a figure which, naturally, is subject to change, according to the needs of propaganda. In any case, it was three thousand too many, and it is fair enough to say that none of the numerous massacres to which the Hungarians have, over the course of their history been subjected to, have harmed the nation as much as this unprecedented massacre, which fanatical, savage beasts wearing the uniform of the Hungarian army had committed.

Once the harm was done, the military found nothing better to do than cover it up. Yet the truth soon made its way to Budapest and even without knowledge of the details, the public could not stop talking about the mysterious massacres. One even spoke about it at the Commission of Foreign Affairs in the House, where a Member of Parliament, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, one of the noblest figures in Hungarian political life (later executed by Hungarian Nazis), grilled the Prime Minister on this subject⁴⁴ with all the fervour of his lively temperament. Bárdossy made the serious

blunder of responding that he did not yet have any precise information on the matter, but in no case will he allow the military authorities to be insulted.

The days went by, but the “facts” were a long time coming, and those provided were riddled with obvious inaccuracies. Bárdossy reacted in his usual passive way, complaining to the Regent, asking for a thorough investigation and severe sanctions, but in the end contented himself with the arrival of a military judge charged with the task of carrying out his investigation at the scene of the crime. Under these circumstances, the least Bárdossy could have done was to offer his resignation as a sign of protest. To step down at this moment would have been his last chance of making a gracious exit. He missed it, just as he had missed so many others!

THE FALL AND ABOUT-FACE OF BÁRDOSSY. THE PROPHET OF WAR

How could Bárdossy have relinquished power before achieving his *oeuvre de la vie*? His life’s great work—as he had then envisaged—was the promotion of István Horthy, eldest son of the Regent, to the position of Deputy Regent. It was by such a constitutional act that Bárdossy hoped to make his position impregnable. Indeed, having—as far as he believed—earned the respect of István’s father for his outstanding service as Prime Minister, he only needed to enlist the assurance of the son’s gratitude and that of the Horthy family, now looking increasingly like a dynasty, so that they will accept him, Bárdossy, wholeheartedly and permanently. However, wanting to do things his own way, the Prime Minister opposed the idea that István Horthy should assume the right of succession here and now, as his parents desired, but which he found to be premature. And so the Regent, who had never really appreciated him, despite his “outstanding service”, gave him notice to step down. He did so obediently, albeit reluctantly, after his “life’s great work” was completed by a solemn vote in both Houses of Parliament.

Bárdossy thus retired to private life, though not to rest. Actually, he lacked peace of mind, an essential precondition of rest. But if something troubled him, it was certainly not the painful memory of four declarations of war in one year, but more the fact that his successor, Miklós Kállay, had taken up the noble task of trying to get Hungary out of the war. The Hungarian people, like all people close to nature, are intuitively cautious; thus, they

were dubious of the abrupt change in orientation, for it did not take long to label the new Prime Minister “*Kállay the Peacemaker*”, as opposed to his predecessor who automatically became “*Bárdossy the Warmonger*”. This was too much for Bárdossy. Why so? Having sacrificed himself by adopting a policy that was far from comfortable, only to prevent an even greater misfortune, that is, total subservience to Germany, why should he now find himself treated as a warmonger, in contrast to a Kállay who was going to repair all the damage? Bárdossy did not have the benevolence of the righteous minded to support such a disgrace. Also, having realized the consequences of the people’s judgement, he accomplished one of the numerous about-faces of his political career—there he was suddenly legitimizing actions, which he as Prime Minister had carried out reluctantly, only as a matter of political necessity. Thus did Bárdossy, having allowed himself to be dragged into the war, become its greatest prophet. Of all his mistakes, this last one was his greatest!

Shortly thereafter he had himself elected President of the *National Christian League*, one of the numerous political organizations of the right. His favourite pastime was then to condemn from this club’s presidential platform the politics of his successor, which he described as defeatist, and at the same time—for want of something better—to turn against me, heaping reproaches on me for what he called “my blind hatred of Germans”. And yet, I did nothing while Kállay was in *office* that I had not done, or did not try to do, under the previous government—except then, had my efforts led somewhere, he, Bárdossy, would have obtained all the credit, while now, everything took place under Kállay’s leadership, which was not at all the same thing!

That was all it took for everyone on the right to applaud the new prophet of war who suddenly saw that he was surrounded by enthusiastic partisans, the very same men who during his time in government had hardly paid him any attention. Actually, this was natural enough. For while Bárdossy was in power, the watchword on the right was to push him to give Hitler much more than he gave in reality—more soldiers to send to the slaughterhouse, more wheat and livestock to feed the Nazis, more severity against adversaries of their doctrine and, especially, harsher measures against the Jews. But now that his successor was trying to reverse course and Bárdossy started to

criticise him, it was he who, in a natural chain of events, became the idol of Hitler's camp. He was delighted; nothing pleased him more than to be admired, even if only by a minority. Thus, in the glow of this incidental popularity, he quickly recovered his energy of old and wrote a book,⁴⁵ a historical analysis of the consequences of the disastrous battle of Mohács (1526), for no other reason than to leave to posterity his political wisdom. Here is a passage: "*To recognize the right path, to take it in time, to profit from the opportunities themselves, and to employ appropriate resources: that is politics.*" It is probably doubtful that posterity, judging every statesman on the basis of his own actions and gestures, will be particularly grateful to Bárdossy for wisdom of this sort. Nevertheless, his admirers then never tired of singing the praises of his work, which only reinforced the author's conviction of his own importance.

Of all the activities to which a fallen politician can devote himself, literary pursuits are generally not the worst; whereas to reappear in an open forum, resolved to prove that what he had done in the past had been the only wise thing to do, is a dangerous venture. Yet this is precisely what Bárdossy set out to do.

He had himself elected Member of Parliament for Szombathely, his native town. Among all the political parties, he was the sole candidate or, more precisely, the only candidate of the reunited parties of the right, because at this time, June 1944, Hungary had already been groaning under the heel of the German occupiers for three months, and all parties other than those on the right had been dissolved. None of this, however, was enough to slow down the political ambition of Bárdossy—quite on the contrary! Had not the German occupation of the country freed him of all his political opponents in one fell swoop? Was Kállay not banished, having taken refuge at the Turkish Legation? Keresztes-Fischer,⁴⁶ Leopold Baranyai,⁴⁷ Laky, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, Rassay, Peyer⁴⁸ and so many others—were they not under lock and key, condemned to silence? The Jews—were they not on their way to the gas chambers of the Nazi concentration camps? Was not all the liberal press outlawed? And a personal aside—was I myself not in exile, stripped of my Hungarian nationality? Who was left in the country to contradict him?

All these obstacles having been skilfully set aside, Bárdossy could freely let loose his oratorical eloquence without fear of being disturbed. He

gave his first speech at Szombathely before an “elite” audience on June 26, 1944. He said, among other things: “Only cowards and a few traitors could think that Hungary alone could stay out of this struggle, a Hungary that Mussolini had called the great victim of the last war. Only cowards and a few traitors could imagine that in taking shelter behind an illusory wall of fallacious neutrality, we could escape the dangers. Only imbeciles could maintain that the Hungarian nation would be able to escape from the dependency of a geographic situation which, until now, had always determined our life on this earth.” Further on, this enlightening passage: “I believe, I confess and assert that the Hungarian nation has understood the task Providence has assigned to it. I believe, I confess and assert that the nation will emerge triumphant from the struggle from which it never wanted to shy away. And I believe, I confess and assert at the same time that the sacrifices of the nation will bear plentiful fruit...”⁴⁹ As for me, I believe that this is enough. Enough because the rest carried on exactly in the same tone and because the lecture delivered two days later in the neighbouring town of Kőszeg differed not at all from the first.

Here then was Bárdossy, a Member of Parliament officiating as high priest and prophet of the war—the very war that he, as head of government, had so severely condemned before the Council of Ministers! Here he is, going as far as to glorify the blood sacrifice which the entire Hungarian army and the entire nation had to bring to help the German cause while as Prime Minister, he had found it excessive to send a mere one-third of the army to the front! What an insanity of the spirit, what decadence!

THE END

The rest of Bárdossy’s life merged with the tragedy of the nation. With this qualifier, however: of the two roads that, at that moment still lay open to him, it was not the hard path of the nation’s ordeal that he chose, but the more comfortable road leading to Germany, the road used by the hordes of Germans fleeing from the Russians. If, however, he made his way to Germany, it was not to settle down, because he would have preferred to spend the rest of his days in philosophical contemplation in Switzerland, country of choice for fallen grandees. But the lightning advance of the Allied armies into Germany prevented the fulfilment of this dream. He

was taken prisoner by the Americans who delivered him to the Hungarian authorities. We know the rest.

László Bárdossy paid his debt with his life; a debt that, by and large, was not solely his. Let us therefore stop here.

May he rest in peace!⁵⁰



PART THREE

THE HOPES, STRUGGLES AND SETBACKS OF MIKLÓS KÁLLAY

Exactly four years ago, at the beginning of March 1942, early in the morning—which means around ten o'clock in Budapest—I was welcomed into the study of my old friend, Miklós Kállay, at the National Bureau of Irrigation, of which he was president.¹ I was going to inform him of the fall of Bárdossy and give him the news that the Regent intended to charge him with the task of forming a new government. The news gave Miklós Kállay no joy. After recovering from his initial surprise, he began to explain to me that in his opinion his time had not yet come; the only policy that he would be willing to pursue would be that of Pál Teleki. Yet, if Teleki, to remain true to his principles, could find no solution other than suicide, and that at a time when we were not yet at war with anyone, how would it be possible to steer this policy towards a happy end in our present situation, with Bárdossy's four wars weighing us down? For a Hungarian Prime Minister to be able again to conduct a Hungarian policy and not a German one, it was first necessary that the root cause of all the harm, Germany be considerably weakened. Yet Germany was still very strong; for the moment therefore there was nothing to be done...

"All of this might be quite true" I responded calmly, "but I positively know that the Regent has firmly made up his mind to call upon your services for the very reason that he is convinced it is you who is most qualified to return the country's policies to the time-honoured traditional path. Better not hesitate for too long." Our conversation continued for another hour at least, but the rest will not be of any interest to the reader. What is important to note is that a few days later, on March 10, 1942, the Kállay cabinet was already assembled, and a secret mission agreed upon by the Regent and the Prime Minister, whose main task would be—despite the presence of pro-Nazi ministers from the previous government—to progressively return

Hungarian policy to the line pursued by the Teleki regime and stand up to all the difficulties that such a reversal must in the nature of things bring about for Hungary in its German war.

If we consider the fact that Hungary's leaders had embarked on this new path—at first on the sly, almost like conspirators!—only a month before England's critical situation, at “the darkest hour” of its history, prompting Churchill to give the most alarming speech of his career in a secret session of Parliament, we must agree that Hungary did not wait long to regain her faith in democracies' ultimate success.

However, to believe in an Allied victory and to extract Hungary honourably from the war were two very different matters. Prime Minister Kállay was under no illusion when it came to the nearly superhuman difficulties he would have to overcome. Nevertheless, he tackled his duty with courage, without letting himself be intimidated by the prospect that, for starters, he would have to show proof of extreme caution in his internal politics and even more so in his foreign policy. And he will find it necessary to say and do things of which he himself disapproved, if only to hide his hand in order to allay the suspicion harboured by the Germans and the Hungarian right towards him. Courage, coupled with a sense of duty and a spirit of sacrifice, is a beautiful and rare quality which Prime Minister Kállay, true son of the millennial Hungary of old, possessed through and through. He was therefore determined to bring the mission he had accepted to a successful conclusion, without knowing how he was going to go about it. Perhaps if he had, at the beginning of his tenure, been able to foresee what would happen in the years to come, its deceptions due to incomprehension, suspicion, even hostility, met with at every step. Had he seen his homeland occupied and ravaged, first by the occupying forces then by the liberators; and he himself taking refuge in the Turkish Legation in Budapest, then tortured inside various Nazi prisons, and finally in a state of agony hurled into the Mauthausen concentration camp, his wife shot by a Nazi bullet and then buried by the Russians, his children scattered, his ancestral home destroyed, and his honourable name dragged through the mud, perhaps—say I—had he been able to foresee all that, might he have hesitated to accept the premiership of a country which could no longer be saved, or would he have preferred suicide, the ultimate solution of Teleki?

But God does not permit us to draw aside even a small corner of the veil concealing our future; accordingly Miklós Kállay had to travel the long

path of a martyr; this was his destiny. Today, at his solitary retreat on the Isle of Capri,² old, worn-out, poor, he might still find one consolation—quite modest, but a consolation nonetheless—that there exists, albeit far away from him, a quill that will not disown him but will try, as far as his feeble resources permit, to recount his true personage, which, apart from certain faults and errors from which no human being is exempt, was one of the noblest and most undervalued in the great Hungarian tragedy.³



The story of Miklós Kállay is of general interest only in terms of his political life as Prime Minister, because it was only in this latter capacity that he played a role on the international scene. What was his role? What was his policy? Why was he destined to fail and, finally, what is the significance of his efforts in the history of Hungary? I think that no one is better qualified to explain the policy of a statesman than that statesman himself. So let him speak. Below is a letter dated March 1, 1944, from Prime Minister Kállay, which was sent to me in the last diplomatic bag to arrive in Stockholm before the occupation of Hungary by the Germans. This letter has much to say!

His Excellency
Antal ULLEIN-REVICZKY
Envoy extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
Stockholm.

By hand.
Strictly private and confidential.

My dear Friend,

I think it necessary to give you a written résumé of my views on the present situation. Kindly regard these lines as a personal communication to yourself, and when using them in no case name the source. My first purpose is to acquaint the leading exponents of our foreign policy with my views on the international situation and Hungary's specific problems,

and to insure that they know exactly the objectives that I hope to achieve by my policy.

The principal objective followed by my Government during the past eighteen months has been to recover as far as possible *Hungary's full freedom of action*, and simultaneously to place both public opinion in the country and the army wholeheartedly at the service of this exclusively Hungarian policy. We started from the assumption that, although the Anglo-Saxons are still far removed from Europe, their policies will touch us ever increasingly. Thus there is good reason to assume that the Anglo-Saxon troops would reach our country before the Russians and that Anglo-American policy (*The Atlantic Charter*)⁴ would decide the future of Central and Eastern Europe.

But these assumptions do not hold good right now. On the contrary, today the Red Army is approaching our frontiers and Russian policy is penetrating Central and Eastern Europe. All our original projects are therefore suspended in midair because, due to the inactivity of the Anglo-Saxon armies and the political withdrawal that has accompanied it, our *imaginary partners* on whom we had reckoned have not turned up. Today the Russian question threatens our very existence, and independently thereof the Anglo-Saxons insist on their unaltered demands for unconditional surrender. Meanwhile, the example of Italy, Poland, the Baltic States, etc., makes it impossible for any Central European State, least of all Hungary, to adopt such a resolution. Unconditional surrender, in the present set of circumstances, would be tantamount to opening the doors to a Russian invasion or Bolshevik penetration. It was exclusively the idea of defence against Russia, which took us, like most of the Central European states, into war. This may have been a mistake, but that does not alter the fact that there is no Government or people that would abandon itself to the Soviets, unless it had itself adopted Bolshevism first. And this cannot be our objective, or the true objective of our civilized Western opponents.

Besides, in a constitutional country like ours, the Government does not have the right to subscribe to an unconditional surrender without the authorization of Parliament: but even that authorization would be without value in this case, unless it accorded with the will of the entire nation. No nation would accept such an unprecedented renunciation, which would mean its certain destruction, except under extreme duress.

Hungarian public opinion is already beginning to feel the shift of the balance to the detriment of the Anglo-Saxons and in favour of the Russians. I had, with the object of creating an atmosphere which would facilitate our orientation towards the Anglo-Saxons, allowed great freedom

of movement to all the political and social factors hostile to National Socialists, from the legitimists to the Social Democrats. Unfortunately, the turn of events has been such that Anglophile circles were less able to take advantage of these possibilities than the pro-Soviets. This has produced a reaction from the right, so that it is today far harder than it was at first to pursue our policy of increasing independence. And, on top of everything else, every word uttered by the BBC does nothing but irritate the Hungarian ruling class, Anglophile since the time of István Széchenyi,* to the point that the most fanatical Anglophiles today are obliged to admit that the Hungarian service of the BBC does not reflect the opinion of British official circles and, accordingly, do not listen to it.

In this situation, then, we must draw up the balance sheet of what Hungary has done and what it can do in the future.

Hungary is the only state in Central Europe to have resisted the National Socialist world philosophy. It has kept its constitution, its independence and its way of living. Hungary has often given open expression to its sympathy and friendship with the West—when it was the only state in the area that was not allied with a Western power and was forced by its losses at Trianon to seek revision, which, however, we always said we wanted to achieve by peaceful means, and did in fact achieve peacefully, before coming into conflict with any power, through the two Vienna Awards, to which the states interested consented, while Romania actually asked for the arbitration.

The Bácska region is the only exception, but in that case it is worth noting that the Yugoslav State had already disintegrated before the Hungarian army set out, and since then, the Serbian population of the Bácska have better managed to preserve their national substance as well as their economic resources. This situation has not changed despite bloody events in Újvidék (Novi Sad). As far as this terrible affair is concerned, I can affirm, without wishing to minimize the serious character of that case, that it was the sole atrocity to arise in Hungary, and at the same time the only one in all Europe where those responsible were brought to justice—albeit rather belatedly—before a criminal court.

The Austrians, the Czechs, the Romanians and the Slovaks have all submitted unreservedly to Nazi rule without putting up any serious resistance to its system. In Hungary, too, movements in this direction have often begun to take shape, and we have had one government, which

* That is, for over one hundred years.

inclined towards it, and the military often flirted with it, but the country was always wise enough to prevent Nazification. Since I became premier the very possibility has been excluded. The Romanians, the Czechs and the others pretend that they are subjected to dictatorial regimes, and the conclusion follows that the countries are therefore not responsible, only the dictators are. This is untrue; for the country could have prevented the dictatorship; and furthermore, in Romania the old parties have been able to work freely enough, and it has been precisely their free activity that has supplied the government with the political backing, without which it could not have remained in office.

Austria greeted the *Anschluss* with enthusiasm and ratified it by plebiscite. Czechoslovakia never showed any effective resistance to the Nazis; on the contrary, it placed all its highly developed industry, its manpower (women included) and its entire economic capacity at the service of the German war production. There has hardly been any sabotage; Heydrich's⁵ and Frank's⁶ bloody enactments were preventive rather than retributive. The present Czech government is the de jure successor of that of Beneš, who himself sent a letter of welcome to Hácha⁷ who might be called Europe's first quisling.

Of Beneš it may be remarked that he was the prime instigator of the disruption of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a move which has since been recognized by all sensible people as a grave mistake, to say the least. Indeed, the Monarchy's disintegration was, at least partly, Beneš's doing. It was his agitation, the dissemination of his false data, which were responsible for the impossible treaties of 1919–1920. His slogan: "Better Anschluss than Habsburg restoration" made it impossible to correct the worst faults of those treaties. The Anglo-Americans themselves are probably not too delighted with his last effort: his demonstrative and exaggerated Russophilia has been and is a major factor in making a settlement of Russo-Polish relations more difficult. The one constant element in Beneš's policy is perhaps his pan-Slavism; between the two wars Czechoslovakia made itself out to be representative number one of the Western political idea, while today it preens itself in the role of the westernmost outpost of Pan-Slavonic Russian policy.

The Slovak *Schutzstaat* (Protectorate) and Croatia are essentially colonies so that it is useless for us to waste many words on them; but from our point of view they have one quality in common: they can always be used at any moment against Hungary if Germany's momentary political interest so dictates. The situation in Romania is no different, with this addition: of all our neighbours it is the best equipped. First the Allies

armed it; then Germany carried on the process and is still doing so. Hungary never got as many arms as Romania did, but of course we never gave Germany so much military and economic support. This relatively well-armed Romania today constitutes one of the chief reasons why we cannot take any premature step of a serious character to regain our independence, in relation to Germany, as the Reich would certainly not hesitate to make use of Romania against us should the need arise.

We have unfortunately no serious Hungarian emigration. It would have been much easier for Regent Horthy and Pál Teleki simply to take an aeroplane out of the country to preserve the fiction of resistance by the legal government, and to leave the country at the mercy of the quislings and the Germans. But the country, thus abandoned to the Germans, would have then greatly reinforced the German economy by the dispatch to the Reich of several million workers and by a thousand other things. However, Teleki killed himself, while the Regent lost his son and designated successor in the endeavour to save the independence and self-determination of the country and its control of the army.

Much has been said about our occupation troops in Russia, but the circumstances that led to their being there have been forgotten. The only condition on which we were able to bring our army back after the defeat at the Don was that we should leave at the disposal of the Germans nine divisions, only lightly armed and under strength at that, amounting with the labour battalions, to about 90,000 men, to occupy the hinterland and the railways. These troops were dispersed about the hinterland and in quite small units, and it was only the unexpectedly rapid advance of the Russian armies that brought some of them into contact with Russian forces. We have no aircraft at the front, only a few pilots doing reconnaissance work for the occupation troops, in German formations and using German machines. In any case they are only a handful.

The Government has repeatedly and urgently demanded the return of our troops in the occupation. The Germans have refused to grant our requests, alleging technical reasons. I am convinced that they have two considerations at the back of their minds. Firstly they do not want to let them come into ethnically Polish territory, that is, the immediate vicinity of the Hungarian-Galician frontier, which was one alternative we suggested. The most important point is that they fear, and probably with good reason, that the Romanians would naturally come forward with the same demand which, considering that Romanian fighting forces on the front line are very considerable, would be a serious matter for the Germans. A further consideration would be that the moment the withdrawal began,

the Romanian army, the superiority of which over our own is at least two to one in terms of manpower, and more in terms of equipment, might easily turn against Hungary. For the Romanians would be perfectly capable of insinuating that the withdrawal of the Hungarian troops was a step aimed against themselves, which they must answer by similar countermeasures. Furthermore, the Germans are well aware that our troops of occupation constitute our only direct participation in the war today. If they were not in Poland, we should be *de facto* non-belligerents, and that is something the Germans would not accept. Our nine divisions are thus hostages and pawns in Germany's hands.

Nevertheless, despite all these difficulties, it does not alter the resolve of the Hungarian government to bring home our troops. On one occasion, orders to that effect had in fact been dispatched, whereupon the Germans answered with a counter-order that they were to be prevented from withdrawing by any available means.

Our occupation troops are not in Russian ethnic territory; the population with which they come into contact is exclusively Ukrainian or Polish and the partisans whom they encounter are not Russians but also Ukrainians who, by the way, are not Communists but Ukrainian nationalists [...] The Hungarian troops, who are on the very best of terms with the local population, are also succeeding in establishing rather amicable relations with the partisans. They even mutually exchange their prisoners, etc. As the Russian front advances, we observe a tendency for the Ukrainian and Polish populations to seek refuge near the Hungarian frontier; it is therefore probable that we shall one day have to address the difficult decision of whether to let into Hungary the masses of Ukrainian and Polish refugees. From a purely humanitarian point of view, it would be impossible to turn them away, but the Russians might consider such a reception as a provocation and it also raises a problem with the Germans.

The refugees are not, however, the only problem raised by the Russian advance. More serious are the questions of the defence of our frontiers and the attitude we should take towards the Russians. In this connection, I see only one possible solution: to occupy the Carpathian line and to undertake its defence with our own troops, no foreign elements at all to be included, and under our own command, so that we remain masters of our own decisions. For this purpose we recently undertook a partial mobilization.

The country now stands between two great dangers: a German and a Russian occupation. Our object is to avoid both. If, under the present circumstances, we do not resist the Russians with our own forces, we can

be sure that the Germans will occupy us. This, however, would have tragic consequences for the Jews, Socialists, Anglophiles, etc., and above all, it would mean the loss of our political and military independence.

There is still the possibility that a quisling “government” might be formed under Germany’s shadow, which would either place the army at Germany’s complete service or disarm it, and place the manpower thus set free and the entire productive resources of the country, along with its communications facilities, unreservedly at the disposal of the German war effort. This would certainly be followed by bombing, naturally on a severe scale, and if Germany were defeated, we would have a Russian occupation on our hands after that. Meanwhile the influential Czech propaganda would certainly get the quisling “government’s” every act scored up against the entire Hungarian people, so that on top of our other heavy losses the atmosphere towards us in the West would be even worse than it is today. There would be no single item to be put to our credit; for we could never play Beneš’s game. The bad conscience of the Great Powers after Munich worked in his favour, but it will not do so in ours, nor have we Russian patronage on which to count.

There is therefore no other way, no other possibility, than to take the most difficult decision: *not to take a jump in the dark, in either direction*. An individual may often think of suicide with longing, as a relief because it is an immediate, grand simplification, but *a nation cannot hazard that*. Moreover, in the present international atmosphere, with Russia’s power and influence at its peak, it would be fatal to force any solution, for this could only work to the advantage of Russian-Czech policy.

“We may hope that time is on our side: that in time common sense, humanity and impartiality will prevail. It is this vision that we must always, in every way, work for, both at home and abroad. This is the angle from which we must observe and examine every move made towards us by the other side to get us out of the war. While the interest of the Allies is to end the war as soon as possible, for us the most important question is to know *how* it will end.

We must therefore make it absolutely plain that, regarding Russia, we cannot retreat from the defensive attitude described above. This in no way means that we are dedicating ourselves in advance and forever to some anti-Russian or anti-Comintern policy. Provided it does not interfere in our internal affairs, we are prepared to live with Russia as good neighbours; but we do not of course want to live in the Russian sphere of influence.

Meanwhile, we do not think in terms of dogmas; and we do not want to make our present attitude too rigid. It must never be forgotten that,

given the situation sketched out at the beginning of this letter, a decision favourable to us cannot come at the present moment. I am however convinced—although I do not overestimate the present tension between the Anglo-Saxons and Russia, nor expect a split between the Allies—that the Anglo-Saxon powers do recognize that Russia constitutes a danger to them, both ideologically and as a power, and that if Russia won, its victory would be followed by collaboration between Russia and a new Germany. It would be practically unavoidable that a defeated, proletarianized and occupied Germany would go Bolshevik and in desperation look to the Soviets for salvation. Germany's present strategy for defence—the Eastern front neglected in favour of the Western—is significant in this respect. If this were recognized, then there is some hope that the central European question would be judged in a saner, and more favourable light.

Hungary must therefore gain time, for with time things will improve for us. Naturally, in the interval we must see to it that the atmosphere towards us on the other side takes a turn for the better. On the whole, we have had a good press in the neutral countries, but this has not had sufficient effect on the press of the countries of the West. Our chief aim should be to make sure that this favourable impression penetrates the Anglo-Saxon press and public opinion, at least to some degree. Another very important aim of ours must be to disprove the three chief charges levelled against Hungary: that its political and social system is feudal, antidemocratic, and antisocial; that it oppressed the non-Magyars; that it mutilated its neighbours' territory (as though the world had been created after Trianon)! It is these charges, which stand like a wall between Hungary and Western public opinion, and make it impossible for the West to judge us objectively. We must at least get the rigid and absolute character taken out of the accusations. There is plenty of material that can be used for this, but always with due circumspection.

I am convinced that we can defend the Carpathians, always supposing of course that the Russians do not want to force the Eastern Carpathians at all costs and that we are not exposed simultaneously to a Russian-Romanian attack. Yet we must be ready to defend our borders alone, the only difficulty I can foresee is if the Mannstein⁸ army wanted to retreat along this route. Yet this seems unlikely because it would mean giving up the oil fields of Ploiești (Romania), which would end it all for Germany.

It would also be a difficult moment if German troops retreating out of the Balkans tried to pass through Hungary, or decided to take up quarters on our frontier. This situation, if and when it arises, would call

for new decisions. It is the task of our foreign policy to facilitate such decisions.

Before everything else, what matters is that our policy must improve the atmosphere, for the continuation of an Anglo-Saxon and Russian war of nerves, and above all the possibility of air attacks, would strengthen the featherbrained right-wing extremists and in no way advance the desired result of helping out the left. I can say this quite safely, the more so since the government's policy meets with full understanding in our so-called left-wing circles. They know very well that as things stand at present, the first result of any disintegration of the Hungarian State apparatus or weakening of the government's position would be to increase the prospects and possibilities of German influence and intervention in Hungary. As it is, the rigidity of Anglo-Saxon policy has given great pleasure to our right and our pro-Germans; they point out triumphantly that they always said it was hopeless to expect anything from the other side. It calls for all the government's authority to restrain this reaction and prevent outbreaks against the Socialists, the Jews, and the National Casino.⁹ As things stand, the government gets no support in this form from abroad; quite to the contrary, things are simply made even more difficult for it. In spite of this, I am confident that we shall be able to hold the domestic political front also.

Everything I have written here is based on the assumption of an Allied victory or, in part, of a peace reached through compromise. The Hungarian government's point of view remains, *meanwhile*, the same. It appears to us, in fact, that Hungary can expect a good and just peace, and one congruent with her national aspirations, only if Germany remains powerful. This fact, and especially if no further degeneration occurs in Germany, still constitutes a guarantee of our old, balanced internal order and social institutions.

Once again, I ask for your complete discretion in connection with this communication, and send you my cordial greetings.

Budapest, March 1, 1944.

Miklós Kállay



This letter is so clear that it needs almost no commentary. Prime Minister Kállay says openly, straightaway, that he has based his whole policy on the assumption that an Anglo-American army—or simply an English one—would make its appearance on the frontiers of Hungary. To this army, Hungary would offer no resistance; on the contrary, it would consider the Anglo-Americans arriving with the Atlantic Charter in hand as liberators. In order to adequately prepare public opinion, as well as the military, for this event, which would free the country from Nazi domination, he was taking great care, already for the past year and a half, to progressively distance himself from the Axis, which he called “regaining our complete independence of action”. The “easement” accorded all the anti-Nazi groups had a similar purpose: to encourage the “Anglo-Saxon leanings of our people”.

Mr. Kállay has uppermost in his thoughts the risk—as he explains in the follow-up—of seeing the Hungarians one day face to face with the Russians rather than with their “imaginary partners”, the Anglo-Americans. Here an interjection is called for.

In scanning the preceding sections of this work, the reader may realize that my aim is not to offer a course on political morality, nor to set myself up as a defender of this or that doctrine. I am trying to present the most important political events of these past years as they unfolded, exploring their causes and pointing out their consequences without assuming the role of advocate of my own country. This being the case, I trust that one would not hold it against me that I do not assume the role of defender of Soviet Russia either—despite the respect the world owes it for the remarkable bravery of its sons—because, most probably, Russia cares little for such a defence. Therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to be indignant over the fact that Prime Minister Kállay—like nearly all of us in Hungary at the time—makes a very sharp distinction between the Western Allies and the Russians, and as much as he wished for the former to come first, he dreaded the entry of the latter in the country. We know that at this time, the Anglo-Americans severely condemned the slightest hint of wanting to choose one’s conqueror, but we can permit ourselves to suppose that today many among

them would be less hard to please on that point. In the light of all that we *know* since then, it might not appear so astonishing that Prime Minister Kállay wanted to hear nothing of the clause of unconditional surrender, for already as things stood in 1943, this famous clause would not at all have been in the Anglo-Americans' favour, on whom there was no condition to impose, but would only have favoured the Soviets, whom he had his reasons to fear.

He therefore did not want the Russians in the country, all the while wishing to maintain "neighbourly relations" with them—because it was not much of a stretch of the imagination to believe that the epithet "Russian" or the epithet "Bolshevik" were one and the same thing. He tried to gain some time by hoping that the Anglo-Americans would recognize for themselves that the best, and perhaps only, way to have a good press in Central and Eastern Europe was to have a presence there. Still believing in the miracle of their arrival, he who never ceased preaching to the friends of the Germans how dangerous it was to stake everything on one card, could only see Hungary's salvation in the approach of the Anglo-Saxons. That is why in his letter he puts such a high premium on what he calls "creating a good atmosphere" for Hungary in the Allied camp, and it is for that reason he gives way to despair at the indifference shown his country by London and Washington. Yet, his country had done so much to counter Nazism, to counter the Germans' war, thereby favouring the war effort of the Allies! In his eagerness to defend the cause of his nation, he demonstrated strictness, undoubtedly exaggerated, towards neighbouring countries that were no less subjected to German pressure. He especially took it out on Mr. Beneš, but I do not believe I am mistaken in stating that today this is all the same to the President of Czechoslovakia.

All in all, there is no reason to bear a grudge against Prime Minister Kállay for having been infuriated by the fact that Slovakia as well as Romania had largely benefited from German mistrust of his regime, and were quick to launch and maintain an odious political and press campaign against Hungary.

What might appear strange is that he does not say a single word about Italy, and yet, without ever having sympathized with Fascism, he was attached to Italy even during the Fascist era. The reason for it—apart from his predilection for the Latin world—is that he wanted to do nothing that was not purely Hungarian and national. He quite simply believed that he

depended on the friendship of Fascist Italy to protect himself from Nazi Germany. “Who will protect us now from this oddball of a man, Hitler?” he cried out the moment I announced to him the news of Mussolini’s downfall.¹⁰ But at the time he wrote this letter, Italy hardly existed any more as far as Hungarian interests were concerned. The *Italy of Mussolini*, completely subservient to Hitler, fought against the *Italy of the King*, co-belligerent of the Allies, and with *both of them* having representation in Budapest, they were nothing but a source of trouble, so Kállay chose to pass over them in silence.

Prime Minister Kállay is also concerned about the possibility of a German occupation of the country, already foreseeing some of its dire consequences; he attempts to justify before the eyes of the Allies his determination to prevent the Russians from entering Hungary. Prime Minister Kállay believed—mistakenly as we can now see—that in warding off the Russians, he would manage to hold the Germans at bay; but, alas, at the very moment he was composing his letter, Hitler’s soldiers were already preparing to invade Hungary which, for the Russians, thereafter became nothing but a German position.

It is apparent that not even all the difficulties with which he struggled and, let us also note, the risks he undertook in opposing Nazism, had succeeded in undermining Prime Minister Kállay’s confidence in the future, and he finishes his letter on an optimistic note. This letter must be seen as ending at the point where he expresses the wish to be able to “hold the domestic front also”. For the last paragraph in which he draws a parallel between the aspirations of Hungary only if “Germany remains powerful” is visibly separated from the text; he was apparently motivated by the fact that, as head of the Government, he must express the opinion of his entire cabinet, even if only as a matter of form.

It is with good reason that I dwell on the risks Prime Minister Kállay took with his anti-Nazi and Anglophile attitude, for it would be puerile to suppose that one could have conducted such a policy consistently in Hungary without provoking a violent reaction from the parties on the right and, ultimately, from the Germans themselves. The German reaction is well known; it was as drastic as it was sudden. Prime Minister Kállay came to realize this nineteen days after having signed his letter. Inside the country the occupation was preceded by a venomous campaign initiated by the

factions on the right against the policies of the government. And *right* did not always signify *opposition*, because the right wing of the governing party was second to none when it came to blaming their own leader. To see how true this was, the reader need only skim over the text of a memorandum, presented below, put together by the pro-Nazi deputies of the party known as the Party of Hungarian Life.¹¹

MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED TO PRIME MINISTER KÁLLAY BY THE RIGHT-WING OF THE GOVERNING PARTY

This memorandum, composed in autumn 1943, was presented in February 1944, to Mr. Béla Lukács,¹² party president, with a request that it be forwarded to the Prime Minister. The latter received the memorandum but did not respond to it. Here is a summary of this tirade of twelve typed pages:

In its introduction, the memorandum focuses on the patriotic duty of the legislators to speak out against certain symptoms likely to threaten not only the future, but the very existence of the nation. “*We perceive with disquiet*” write the signatories, “*that a segment of our diplomatic missions and members of organizations abroad are endeavouring to persuade the government—in direct opposition to the opinion of our military leaders—to base its political conduct on the assumption that the Anglo-Saxons have already won the war.*” It seems pertinent to ask: What will happen, if the said representatives are mistaken? For years we have been told that we must not stake the existence of the nation on a single card, namely a German victory, because our existence and our future are treasures so sacred that they must under no circumstances be jeopardized. And yet, there are those who would stake the country’s future on the card that the Anglo-Saxons could win the war, and this without the aid of the Russians, nay, if need be, against them.”

The memorandum pointed out that such an attitude could only be explained by the predilections of a few incompetent diplomats. One must therefore energetically reject it. It went on to assert that it was a total error to suppose that a mistaken foreign policy could be remedied by a leftward orientation at home.

The signatories then argued the impossibility of imagining an Anglo-Saxon victory capable of warding off the Bolshevik influence. Were Germany to be defeated, the argument went on, and were Bolshevism to gain the upper hand, the fate awaiting Europe would be unimaginably desolate. The text continued: "It is thus clear that the spreading of the Bolshevik deluge cannot be stemmed by the course described above. For even supposing that the English gave some promise to this effect, no one with a sense of responsibility and a sane appreciation of recent events could accept such a promise as valid. One need only look at the Polish situation and the Italian tragedy. The daily intensification of the Bolshevization of Southern Italy under the armed protection of the invaders, the persecution of the Church, the miserably dependent situation of the Badoglio cabinet, and the resolution to remove the head of the Italian State. It is also a well known fact that in the Balkans the Anglo-Saxons have officially recognized the Communist Tito and therewith brought Bolshevism right up to our southern frontiers."

The signatory deputies then pointed to the grievous consequences, which would ensue if we turned away from our German allies, and stressed the fundamental thesis of political history, which argued that the Hungarian people, nipped between the arms of the Slav pincer, were predestined to make common cause with Germany against Pan-Slavism.

The text continued:

The abandonment of Axis politics and an Anglo-Saxon orientation will lead some of our compatriots to the erroneous conclusion that the Anglo-Saxons' allies, the Soviets, were not to be considered a serious menace. It is in this mistaken notion that we see the motive for the leftward orientation of our foreign policy. This phenomenon entails some serious consequences, the most serious of which is that the closer war approaches, the greater the danger that the *German army, having lost trust in us, will enter Hungary not as an ally but as a force occupying* a field of battle. This state of affairs might produce a tragic schism in Hungarian society, infected with Anglophile sympathies and corrupted by untimely anti-German slogans. No nation can ever survive without the determined intention to defend itself. Unfortunately, in this respect, Hungarian public opinion

is completely confused and at sea. Meanwhile, unbridled agitation, which underrates the Bolshevik menace, is carried on.

As a result of this vacillating foreign policy of ours, our country, which under the inspiration of the Szeged Idea¹³ had passed through years of development unparalleled in our history, is being driven in spirit towards the left by forces secretly in revolt against the Regent's government. The conflict between these two opposing forces, the right-wing Szeged Idea and the more and more prevalent leftist trend, is producing not only uncertainty and disorientation but also a state of impotent lethargy, the most dangerous result of which is that it breaks down, shrivels and disintegrates the clean, vital instincts of the nation and the fighting spirit, moral energy and courage demanded by the struggle.

Germany's friends go on to explain what they mean by the forward progress of the forces of the left favoured by the government.

The leftist trend is evinced, first and foremost, by the freedom allowed to the Social Democratic Party and the so-called *Popular Front* to organize itself. The leaders of the Social Democratic party are allowed full liberty to agitate, hold meetings, and rebuild their organizations, even though in spirit the working masses have by now turned away from international socialism. The Social Democrats' training schools for agitators, for example, pursue their activities unhindered in Nagyvárad, Mezőberény, Szarvas, Kondoros, Szombathely, Fesőgalla, Salgótarján, Kassa and Szentes. There may even be others of which we are unaware. The police are debarred from attending these schools, apparently by higher orders, and we hear that lately some of the lecturers have been telling their audiences that these training schools for agitators are needed so *that power not be allowed to slip ever again from the Marxist working classes*. The events of twenty-five years ago should never be repeated, they said.

The Minister of the Interior has tried to reduce the meetings of the various political parties to the standing *committee* meetings only, whereas the Social Democratic Party is permitted to hold meetings at which the attendance reaches hundreds or even a thousand. The fact that the meetings of the Social Democratic Party proceed apparently unhindered leaves the masses under the impression that this party has the *support of the state*. This impression is further strengthened all over the country by the official permission given to the wholesale distribution of *Népszava's*¹⁴ extra-large size “Day of Rising” posters at a time when, owing to the well-known paper shortage, the national press and book publications are subjected to stringent controls. The above-mentioned impression is further propagated by certain socialist leaders who openly advertise their close contact with government circles, and their contention finds support in the fact that their *most active centres of organization are in state concerns or concerns closely connected with the state*.

The memorandum goes on to criticize in particularly virulent terms the disruptive activities of the so-called Peasant Alliance whereby the peasants would be at the mercy of the leftists.

We have been horrified to see the organization of the farmers launch, on a class basis and on official instigation, a process which, owing to the collaboration of the Social Democrats, has spread left-wing propaganda among different social classes. This mistaken domestic policy has pushed aside the proven farmers' associations and by letting the left-wing leaders come to the fore, has not merely set on foot a movement reminiscent of the spirit of György Dózsa¹⁵ against the natural leadership of the middle class, but has also directly made possible the emergence of distinctly agrarian-Bolshevik elements. This officially fostered peasant movement has brought back multitudes to the debilitated relics of the Independent Smallholders Party.

And the goals towards which this party's *second team*—after the departure of the first¹⁶—is leading the farming masses that have been caught in its net and are bewitched by its slogans, are made sufficiently clear by the reiterated public announcements of the party leaders about their collaboration with the Marxists. This is all the more dangerous since it is well known that in 1919 the farmer classes offered wholehearted resistance to the proletarian dictatorship. There is no better proof of the irresponsibility displayed by the leaders of this so-called organization of the peasantry and of the ideological and political attitude which they have taken up, than their public speeches in Miskolc and elsewhere, as well as the *memorandum** which the Independent Smallholders handed to the Prime Minister, a memorandum which one naturally did not neglect to distribute in large numbers at home and abroad. The omission of any proceedings against the authors of this tirade caused almost irreparable moral damage to our public opinion. Another trait which highly characterizes the state of mind of the party is the well-known declaration of one of its members, according to which we should restore our liberated southern territories to the Serbs.

An entire series of articles in the press is dedicated to winning over intellectuals to the National Front; clearly in this case censorship, generally so rigorous and meticulous, should

* This memorandum dated July 31, 1943, comprising 33 typed pages, is a brave critic of the pro-Axis politics and a thorough exposé of the Smallholder Party's programme. (Its author, the deputy Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, one of the vice-presidents of the Party, was assassinated by the Nazis in 1945.) To illustrate the spirit which inspired the author of this memorandum, as well as the entire party which approved every word, it is enough to quote a single sentence from its concluding paragraph: "Whatever will be the development of the war operations in the Balkans and in Central Europe, we must stick to the principle that Hungary, which has to make every possible effort to regain its independence, its liberty and its neutrality in this war, must sooner accept the battle against the German army than the struggle against the British; this is the point of view of our Party!"

be applied to stall this agitation. For more than a year, the country has been inundated with pamphlets signed *Party of Peace*, without the political department of the police, usually most vigilant, making the slightest effort to put an end to it. In reality, the Hungarian public, quite rightly concerned about the free postal circulation of all these pamphlets, never heard of anyone responsible being singled out and chastised. All of these phenomena naturally contributed to the rise of all sorts of leftist luminaries and *salon Bolsheviks* in public associations and ever more numerous official organizations.

One of the principal grievances of the right against the Kállay regime was the latter's continuous refusal to agree to a radical solution to the so-called *Jewish question*, very well aware that this "solution" would have meant the extermination of close to 800,000 Hungarian Jews. Naturally, the signatories of the rightist memorandum made much of the "grave omission" of the government and criticized it bitterly. They reproached the Prime Minister, among others, saying that "for some time now, a number of newspapers, political groups and various other organizations have been allowed to debate freely the rehabilitation of Jews in the public eye, whilst government censorship mercilessly thwarts any discussion of this question in accordance with *Hungarian interests*." The authors of this memorandum describe this situation as "untenable".

Another grievance held against the Kállay cabinet is its failure to devote the country's entire economic production to serve the war effort. The liberal principles invariably present in Hungarian economic policy are equally attributed to leftist influences.

Following this, the signatory deputies take on the press.

For the last few years, the direction of the press is more or less the opposite of what it should be. It is only since the former chief of press [author of this work] has gone abroad that a slight improvement is noticeable. From the point of view of foreign policy the most glaring example is the attitude of the capital's press. Apart from Pester Lloyd, Függetlenség, Új Magyarág, and the three Arrow Cross papers (so-called government dailies representing the views of the party's right

wing), *not a single Budapest newspaper could be considered pro-German*. Furthermore, *Magyarország*, the government's own organ, was not embarrassed to publish in its New Year edition a lead article entitled: *The Principle of Unconditional Surrender*, which was so unprecedentedly defeatist in spirit as to cause the utmost scandal.* The writing style of the Hungarian press is good for everything else except to instil in the mind of the public the will to resist as required by these times of historic tribulations. Another—only too effective factor—in this moral disintegration is the radio. It would be highly desirable that all the factors adapted for propaganda: press, radio, film, censorship, etc, should be placed under a unified, undeviating and strictly nationalist control.

We must also mention the serious anomalies manifested in the field of book publication, a field which is of outstanding importance from the nationalist point of view. At a time when we, the others, are obliged to struggle with the gravest of difficulties due to the shortage of paper, new publishing houses—mainly Jewish—have multiplied in alarming numbers. The books published by these houses attempt to familiarize their readers with the ideology of our adversaries and to transform Hungarians into cosmopolites entirely devoid of national consciousness. It is high time to sort out this *jungle*, and not only from an economic, but also from a national standpoint.

Having pointed out certain “errors” in the administration of the re-annexed territories, notably that the Government seems to be demonstrating an “exaggerated” consideration for the various non-Hungarian nationalities, the authors of this memorandum predict that the *road along which the country has for some time past been advancing will lead straight to catastrophe*.

To finish, they recommend a return without delay to a nationalist path, one allowing the nation to devote itself joyfully, without reservation to the great struggle for the nation and the Regent.

* I myself suggested this article from Stockholm.



Whatever importance we attach to the critical facts attributed to Prime Minister Kállay by the authors of this memorandum, one fact emerges with exceptional clarity: the regime to which the Prime Minister gave his name did not exactly draw its inspiration from *fascist principles*, as certain people are wont to argue. One can easily imagine that had the Germans hesitated to clamp down on Hungary, any last scruples would have evaporated upon reading this indictment which—we can assume—was handed to them before it reached its addressee. Besides, the Germans did not even need this memorandum to know the complaints of the right against the regime, for these complaints were aired whenever an opportunity arose: in meetings, in the press, even in Parliament. Obviously, the Prime Minister also had to contend with other critics, from the *left*, who reproached him for not having *already* publicly turned his back on the Axis and for *still* having too much regard for Hitler. But while these criticisms were justified theoretically, their inspiration came from abroad; they were at best an imperfect reflection of the ideas of the Hungarian parliamentarians of the left, who better understood the situation, and an even less clear reflection of the views of the Jews who understood only too well that the policies of Prime Minister Kállay were the only way to save them, or, at least, to prolong their existence.

After occupation of the country, the Germans, as well as the Hungarian quislings, were quick to resume their criticisms of the pro-Axis deputies to better justify their own political persecution of all who had supported the deposed regime. To furnish proof, we are spoiled for choice, let us content ourselves with two pieces of testimony coming from well-known figures among the Hungarian quislings.

THE KÁLLAY REGIME—AS SEEN BY ANDOR JAROSS

Following the German coup of March 19, 1944, the quisling Sztójay government proceeded to nominate new regional prefects. A few former “trustworthy” prefects were retained. Generally, the inauguration of a new

prefect gave the cabinet ministers an opportunity to turn up and contribute to the grandeur of the ceremony by a speech adapted to the circumstances. The quislings saw no need to diverge from this practice; thus, the swearing in of the new prefect in Szombathely took place in the presence of the new Minister of the Interior, Andor Jaross,¹⁷ one of the most fanatical of the Nazis, whose long rant paid tribute to his government, while assaulting the preceding Kállay Government, toppled by the Nazi putsch. Here is a passage from his speech:

“[...] March 19 came as no surprise! During the preceding months there had been a deliberate demolition of all the values that our nation had brought about since the fall of the communist regime (1919) and which it had been able to develop even within the narrow framework of its Trianon lifetime. One fought against the great moral values, which were the sacred heritage not only of a dismembered Hungary, but also of the Hungarians of our northern territories, of Transylvania and Bácska, all linked to the homeland. Without now wishing to pass judgement on our recent past, I cannot pass in silence over the fact that *recently we were ashamed when we read the great majority of our Hungarian newspapers*. These papers dared to curse even the Szeged programme. They tried to introduce into Hungarian life a sort of democracy mixed with Marxism. They tried to make the nation believe that it was possible to reach a compromise with the Jews, so that this unhealthy race shall continue to pour its venom in the circulation of our Hungarian blood. They wanted to deaden the historical ambitions of the nation, without being mindful of the fact that without these ambitions the people of this land would not be worthy of the name Hungarian.

“In addition, these circles have already extended their hands beyond the frontiers of the country to search for allies amongst those who are our eternal historic enemies and who would only retain their former positions as great powers through the ruins of Hungary and the burial of Hungarian life. These people would be capable of reconciling themselves even with Beneš! They talk of Stalin, that muscovite pope, as if he was no longer what he had been in the past, as if bolshevism had already softened, as if, in Russia, a national transformation had taken place, which would establish a guarantee for every European nation to find its place under the protective wing of the great Soviet Russia! Such abominable propaganda could not fail to provoke a reaction, and this reaction takes the form of a fresh historical force, which has just charted the course of Hungarian life in the right direction.”¹⁸

THE KÁLLAY REGIME—AS SEEN BY GYÖRGY OLÁH

Speech by Deputy Oláh at the swearing-in of the prefect of Ungvár

Deutsche Zeitung

(Journal of Hungary's *ethnic German community*)

Budapest, July 28, 1944.

On Wednesday, the prefect of the town of Ungvár and of Ung County was sworn in. Deputy György Oláh¹⁹ represented Béla Imrédy, Economics Minister and Andor Jaross, Minister of the Interior. After the prefect, Mr. Réthy-Haszlinger, in a brief address, praised the National-Socialist ideology, Mr. Oláh addressed the gathering and proclaimed, among other things, the following:

“The nation insists that an end should be put to all quarrels between parties. *The gravest mistake made by the previous administration, a mistake we shall never be able to forgive, was in trying to convince public opinion in the country that this war was not our war.** Today one talks a great deal about sabotage, but one seems to forget that holding forth on the humanitarian spirit at a point in time when one should rather deal a blow with one's fist, is also called sabotage. All the misfortunes of the year 1919 would be child's play in comparison to what would happen to us should we fail to resist the enemy.”

Deputy Oláh's speech was received with long and enthusiastic cheering.

* In a major parliamentary speech in December 1943 Prime Minister Kállay declared that Hungary was no longer participating in the war, all it was doing was defending its frontiers—against everyone, thus also against the Germans.



I do not believe I am wrong in my opinion that the above sufficiently clarifies the politics of Miklós Kállay. What remains to be elucidated is whether these politics—at least in their broad outlines—were well grounded. To this question I responded affirmatively in a letter I sent from Stockholm to the Prime Minister at the end of January 1944. Here then is the relevant passage:

“Politics differs from mathematics above all in one respect: in politics, there is no absolute truth. A policy is therefore good if it makes the most of given circumstances. At the same time these circumstances entail a limit to the options, it is no exaggeration to say that by wishing to do better, one risks spoiling everything. With this sole reservation, I highly recommend your policy as valid. Had you listened to the voices emerging from the right, all options still available to us from the side of the Allies would have faded away forever. If, on the other hand, you had followed the repeated recommendations of the BBC broadcasters, Hungary would already be under German occupation—and to the benefit of nobody, except the occupying forces and the few quislings in the country. Thanks to your politics, the spirit of the nation is still intact and we are still our own masters. Now what is essential is to endure until the hour comes to act in the interest of the nation.”

Unfortunately Hungary could not endure until the much hoped-for hour of action because, despite all the precautions taken by the Prime Minister, Hitler decided to clamp down. Seen from the point of view of German occupation, we must recognize, rather belatedly, that the policies pursued by Miklós Kállay were a mistake—at least in the sense that by failing to hide his hand from Hitler, Prime Minister Kállay in the end lost the gamble. Obviously, had he not turned a deaf ear to certain good advice which the other side never ceased to give, and instead of sticking to the principle of opposition to the powerful neighbour, had he prostrated himself before it, like Antonescu²⁰ in Romania, he could have, with steering gear in hand, repeated—and even anticipated—King Michael’s master stroke.²¹ However, with a powerful German army in the country and, on top of it all, a quisling government in place, this was no longer possible.

There is also another scenario in which the policy of Prime Minister Kállay would have succeeded: if the Hitlerian Reich had disintegrated before the overthrow of his own regime. In that case, he would be celebrated today as the saviour of the nation. Alas, the opposite happened, and so many admirable efforts were reduced to ashes by Nazi soldiery! After the Germans, it was the Russians' turn, who showed a hand that was no less gentle. He, of course, was condemned by both of them. Yet today he stands condemned also by a number of his compatriots, especially by those who would not have survived the cataclysm without his great concern for the lives and property of his people. Those who think only of avoiding danger today, and criticize him for not having rushed into it yesterday. On the whole, this is absolutely normal: this world rarely provides satisfaction for statesmen. Prime Minister Kállay therefore had to assume the risks of the profession, as do many others who are not all on the losing side! Only—and this is the tragedy of his position today—the Anglo-Americans also do not appear to appreciate what he did for them. How bitter for him! A letter he sent me in the summer of 1945 from Capri, where, after his liberation from the camp of Mauthausen, he was the “guest” of the American military command, bears witness to this. Here is the text of this letter, bearing the stamp of the military censor:²²

Hotel Bellavista

Capri, June 27, 1945

Dear Friend,

I thank you most warmly for your telegram of condolence received at the same time as the news of the tragic event which occurred in the garden of the Embassy of Turkey in Budapest.*

Thus it is all over for me! My country ruined, my home destroyed, my wife dead. Of my sons, Kristóf²³ is, as it appears, in Budapest; Niki²⁴ according to the Bishop Áron Márton,²⁵ is in a Russian camp, in

* His wife, Helen Kállay, killed by a German bullet in the garden of the Turkish Embassy in Budapest.

Transylvania as a prisoner-of-war (could you not do something for him?); András²⁶ was, until October 15,* in Mauthausen, from where he was liberated by the Americans. I was also there.

Now, I am here alone and abandoned. Like my country, I am treated with cold indifference. My movements on the island are unrestricted; I live in a room three metres in length; my nourishment is sufficient, but of far inferior quality than that of the guards and military drivers. That has, of course, no significance in itself, but I still feel it is degrading.

I shall not speak of politics, although I have much to say...

It would be wonderful, if you could come over here; I fear, however, that this will not be possible. The island is freely accessible, therefore I already had the pleasure of a visit from our friends from Rome. But it is you that I again long to have beside me.

I hope that you are all well. Please present my respects to your wife and embrace your little daughter²⁷ for me.

I clasp your hand with deep affection.

Your old friend,

Miklós Kállay

A shattered life.
He deserved better!

* Date of the Szálasi putsch.



PART FOUR

ON THE ROAD TO PEACE

A

MY MISSION IN SWEDEN

(Talks with the Allies)*

When, in August 1943, Jenő Ghyczy, who had just been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, suddenly offered me the post of Minister to Stockholm, I felt enormous relief and accepted so quickly as to make it almost unseemly in diplomacy. To go from Budapest to Stockholm, and to exchange my exasperating functions as chief of press for the functions of a Minister Plenipotentiary in a neutral country would have been a welcome change under any circumstances, but was even more so at this moment in time, when on top of everything else my relations with the Germans, never excellent, had worsened to the point that staying in the country within easy reach of Hitler would have been extremely dangerous. The Germans had come to realize that despite all their attempts to Nazify the country, I had thwarted them, as far as I possibly could—so naturally enough they bore me a grudge.

After several unsuccessful attempts by the German Minister, Herr von Jagow,¹ to end my activities, I was finally fingered personally by Hitler and Ribbentrop.

By Hitler, during Regent Horthy's visit to the *Hauptquartier* in April 1943. During their meeting, which was a stormy one, the Führer handed over to the Regent a memorandum containing a list of all the "crimes" of the Kállay government. It was labelled the *evil genius* of the Hungarian Government.

* In dealing with the talks that took place between Hungary and the Allies during the war, I am here only able to convey my personal recollections.

By Ribbentrop, who put his Italian colleague, Signor Bastianini² on guard against me. I got wind of it during the same spring of 1943, by means of a letter sent by our Minister at the Quirinal,³ who warned me that Signor Bastianini had communicated to him, under the seal of secrecy, the following (I quote the text of the letter): “The Germans have repeatedly cautioned the Italian Government that the Hungarian-German controversy can be attributed far less to the intentions of the Hungarian Government than to the fact that *the Hungarian chief of press harbours a manifest dislike for the Reich and expends feverish energy in this regard*. This was the opinion expressed by Ribbentrop to Bastianini during their most recent meeting.”

Gradually, the foreign press also got wind of my disagreement with the Germans. I shall only quote the *Times* which, in one of its editions in early July 1943, after reporting that the Hungarian press was in a state of open revolt against Germany, noted the following: “*The Kállay cabinet completely refuses to give way to Berlin’s repeated demands to dismiss Minister Ullein-Reviczky because of his English wife and his consistently unfriendly attitude towards the Axis*. Again, most recently, Minister Ullein-Reviczky irritated Berlin by launching a campaign in favour of the development of a Hungarian-Turkish entente, based on close ethnic relations and traditional political friendship.”

Even in this country, the Nazis attacked me everywhere: in their press, in their secret sessions, in their public meetings, before Chamber committees, indeed in plenary sessions in Parliament. As the government could not risk breaking off relations with Hitler because of me, it was up to me to leave as soon as possible.

Where to? I wanted to go to Switzerland, but the German occupation of Lombardy, a consequence of the Italian surrender, blocked off the route to that country, and the thought of passing through Germany never even crossed my mind. I had also thought of seeking asylum with my Turkish friends, but during this past year, Istanbul had become such a centre of international intrigues, in which Hungarians passing through participated as best they could, that any Hungarian going to Turkey was right away suspicious to the Germans. Under these circumstances, I had to take it for granted that the Germans would do everything to block my passage, or at least, my arrival in Turkey. The last option was Spain; not with the intention of staying, but to get to Portugal. I had a very good reason to go to Spain: I was invited there in return for the visit that some distinguished

Spanish journalists had made to us at the beginning of the summer of 1943; as for the follow-up, one might suppose that it would be all the same to the Spanish if, on leaving their country, my path would lead me to Lisbon rather than Budapest.

I was in the process of organizing this voyage when—as I mentioned above—the position in Stockholm appeared out of the blue.

It was understood that if I went to Sweden, it would not be exclusively “to represent the Horthy regime”—as one likes to say today about the missions of Hungarian ministers—but to bring the secret talks, which had been ongoing with the Allied camp since the beginning of 1943, to a successful conclusion.

The origins of these discussions go back to the summer of 1942, a part of which I spent, as usual, in the villa of my English father-in-law⁴ on the shores of the Bosphorus, near Istanbul. Not only the residents of this villa but also the entire circle of friends who visited it belonged to the Allied camp, and I did not have the impression that my presence lessened their number. It was there, over the course of many conversations with very competent persons, that we laid the foundation for future contacts between Hungary and the Allied armies. This contact became tangible when, with the consent of London and General Headquarters in Cairo, I dispatched to Istanbul one of my most trusted aides, Mr. András Frey,⁵ diplomatic editor of the great liberal newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian nation), to be our liaison with the Anglo-American allies.

Below are the instructions I gave to Mr. Frey, with the consent of Prime Minister Kállay and General Szombathelyi, Chief-of-Staff:

*Communications to be transmitted to the competent Anglo-American executive bodies.*⁶

1. If the Anglo-American and Polish troops reach the borders of Hungary, the Hungarian armed forces would not resist them. In exchange, Hungary asks for *nothing*. It is however understood that such an attitude could only be observed by the Hungarian side towards the official detachments of Allied armies, and not towards groups of supporters.
2. Hungary is, in principle, also ready to take positive action against the Germans under the condition that a practical cooperation can first be established between our two armies.

3. The purpose of the present offer is not to save the present Hungarian regime, but solely to save the Hungarian people.”

Mr. Frey passed this offer to the Anglo-Americans when he arrived in Istanbul in early February 1943. The response from the English arrived a few weeks later; its wording was as follows:

“The Hungarian Government would find it advantageous to dispatch to Istanbul at the earliest possible opportunity two high-ranking army officers to implement the details of the offer made. The contact between these officers and the allied bodies will be carried out through Mr. Frey as go-between.”

Unfortunately, our situation was such that military negotiators could not be dispatched to Istanbul because Prime Minister Kállay, despite his desire to get along with the Allies, believed that it would be extremely dangerous, under the watchful eyes of the Germans, to establish contact with the British army *before they were close enough to come to our aid if need be*. We therefore had to content ourselves with sending to Istanbul, during the summer of 1943, a young official from my department, László Veress,⁷ to bring us a radio transmitter which the British military had in the meantime offered us; because, from the moment radio contact was established between us and the English, the cooperation we so desired would be consummated—or so we thought.

Meanwhile, the young, zealous official, when he came face to face with the English, offered nothing less than *unconditional surrender*. This magic phrase did not fail to hit the mark, so much so that it opened the door to the office of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen,⁸ His Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador. Sir Hughe welcomed Veress kindly, but recommended that he return to his country and have the offer legitimized by a Hungarian minister in a neutral country; one could then continue negotiations. Veress returned, provided with the radio transmitter, and gave us a complete account of his adventures.*

* Thanks to this transmitter, the Hungarian government was in contact with the British High Command in Cairo until the German occupation of the country in March 1944. During this time, the Anglo-American Allies committed not a single act of war against Hungary, and naturally, neither did the Hungarians against them.

As my appointment to the post in Stockholm coincided with these events, Prime Minister Kállay found me to be the best qualified to resume the course of our conversations with the Allies, and explain to them that we truly had no intention of imposing any conditions—our offer of February proved that—and we were only awaiting their arrival to cast off the Nazi shackles. But they should do us the favour of avoiding the humiliating expression of capitulation, which was appropriate only for the true enemies of the Allies.

Bearing these instructions, I left for Sweden with my wife and little girl, not without having to use all the influence of the Hungarian government to obtain our transit visas from the Germans.



All who have served in any capacity for any country would agree that after presenting the letters of credentials, it is several weeks before any Minister or Ambassador can begin any useful work. Diplomats are slaves to convention. Let the world fall apart, they must nevertheless discharge an entire series of visits exactly according to protocol, to official circles, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as to the diplomatic corps, and they must, naturally, receive everyone in return. Moreover, there are distinguished personalities in local society and in the community at large, whom one must get acquainted with, then there is the need to familiarize oneself with local current events as well as the essential problems of the host country, which the head of mission must study before taking a single step forward.

I was no exception to these rules. During all of these general duties, my activities in Sweden were greatly facilitated by the extraordinary courtesy and innate friendliness of the Swedish, who always do their utmost to smooth, and the very least to complicate the resolution of affairs. All in all, there was no outstanding matter between our two countries and there was not a shadow of disagreement clouding the horizon. Nor did we encounter any difficulties with Swedish public opinion, which followed with friendly interest the various manifestations of the will of the Hungarian people, longing to declare their independence in the face of the German colossus, if only because, up to a point, the same danger was threatening the Swedish people.

After all the constantly irritating tensions of Budapest, my life in Sweden passed so pleasantly that I could have abandoned myself to life's pleasures, except that I had not been sent to Sweden for enjoyment and relaxation. My first and most important duty was to establish contact at the first possible opportunity with the Allies to agree on the practical details, which would enable us to cast off the shackles of Nazi Germany.

Nevertheless, such contact—especially for a plenipotentiary Minister—depends on a certain number of conditions and requires preparatory acts which, despite all the benevolence of the Allies towards my person, take time. Thus, my first meeting with the representative of the *Joint Chiefs of General Staff* (the mutual Anglo-American chief of staff), himself an American accompanied by a young American diplomat, only took place on December 1, 1943. I was accompanied by my right-hand man and the official in charge of liaison with the Allies, Mr. Andor Gellért.⁹

The date was not particularly favourable for talks between Hungary and the western Allies since this was the very day after the Teheran Conference. Now—as we know today—it was at Teheran that the great Allies agreed to the allocation of Eastern Europe to the sphere of operations of the Red Army. Obviously, on the day of our meeting with the Allied representatives, I did not know anything about this, and it is likely that they were not informed either of all the accords to be reached; in any case, it is certain that at the time for which the date of our interview was set, Anglo-American military plans for Eastern Europe were still the old plans.

The first alarming news concerning the result of the Teheran Conference came from the Minister of Japan,¹⁰ who told me without giving me any further explanation of this statement: “*There will be no Anglo-American invasion in the Balkans.*” I communicated this information to Budapest, but they did not consider it reliable. To tell the truth, I was also very sceptical.

The Japanese minister also told me something else that has often engaged my thoughts since then. Having admitted the possibility that the Germans would finally be crushed, he declared that this would have no effect on the war in the Far East. “The Japanese Army—he explained—is intact and it can continue to fight the war for another ten years if necessary; whereas it is doubtful that the Americans, and even less likely that the British would be capable of doing the same. Besides, *from the moment they feel the pressure of Russia, pressure that will not fail to exert itself, the desire to do battle against Japan will soon fade.*” The Japanese therefore thought they

had many reasons to feel confident. Of course they were not aware of the *atom bomb*, which from one day to the next would upset their calculations!

Meanwhile, what was important for me was not what would happen after the victory in Europe, but how I was going to deal with the Allies so that this victory would not find us on the wrong side.

Thus, on December 1, 1943, I met with the representative of the *Joint Chiefs of Staff*, which pleased me greatly. Our conversation took place in a thoroughly cordial atmosphere and gave me the opportunity of outlining the Hungarian public's favourable disposition towards the Allies, as well as the goals set by Prime Minister Kállay. I also touched lightly on the prickly question of *unconditional surrender* by saying the following: "We do however have one condition to lay down, which is that you reach us as soon as possible. The rest is for you to decide, according to your conscience and your interests." The response was candid laughter and we agreed that I would present to them in writing the propositions of Prime Minister Kállay.

Here is another obstacle overcome, I said to myself. We were therefore on the right track, but success hardly depended on us. After all, if I were to declare to our so-called enemies—certain of conveying faithfully the thoughts of our leaders—that our only condition was for them was to reach us as quickly as possible, to save us from our so-called allies, then this was no longer a war. Besides, it never was a war—at least as far as the Anglo-Americans were concerned—but a sort of *formal* state of war brought on by an unfortunate combination of outside circumstances. This was our point of view. At any rate, we were far closer to our "enemies" than we were to our "allies". This was the truth of the matter.

For the affair to succeed, three conditions were required: 1. That we persevere until the arrival of the Allies; 2. That their arrival be an absolute certainty; 3. That the nation is morally prepared to receive them as liberators. The first condition depended primarily on the Germans, but partly also on us, particularly on our ability to manoeuvre. The second depended solely on the Allies; there was nothing we could do to speed things up. As for the third condition, I still had certain concerns, which I considered my duty to reveal to my government. I cite below a confidential report I addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the subject:

His Excellency Monsieur Jenő de Ghyczy,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Budapest
Private and Confidential.

The speech delivered by our Minister of National Defence during the debate on his department's budget, gave me cause for serious concern. This speech is heavily influenced by a frame of mind leading straight to catastrophe, a mental attitude in complete contrast to the policy of Your Excellency and that of the Prime Minister. The Minister of Defence seems to be of the opinion that Hungary must not act solely in its own interests, but that it should be obliged to fight on behalf of those so-called Allies, and that the salvation of the nation, in the event of the defeat of these allies, would be treason! This is the foundation upon which they recommend we build the future of our country! Fortunately, the highly successful speech of Your Excellency helped neutralize the devastating effect of this outburst. But we must despair of our future if we allow people of such ideas to remain at the head of the army at a time when the international situation will force us urgently—and perhaps at short notice—to decide, yes or no, do we want to save our country, or do we prefer it to perish with Germany.

The current foreign policy of the government is only possible under the present circumstances. However, the salvation of the nation will not depend on this policy, but rather on the strength we can draw forth, if need be, to persuade the nation, and above all the army, to follow in the right direction.

Stockholm, December 7, 1943.

Ullein-Reviczky

(One year later—what cruel irony!—the said Minister of Defence, General Csatay,¹¹ and his wife committed suicide in a Nazi prison.)

During all this time, coded letters came and went between Stockholm and Budapest by every available courier, to perfect the terms of the memorandum I was to present to the Allied Chiefs of Staff. Finally, on February 20, 1944, I received final instructions, which I considered to be in order, and on February 22 I sent to the allied addressee the following memorandum:

I have been authorized to give you the following statement:

In the event that Anglo-American forces reach our border, the Hungarian Government, which, in accordance with prevailing Hungarian opinion, in no way regards itself an enemy of England or the United States, would consider that good order and peace in the Danube Basin and the requisites of civilized existence would be guaranteed by the presence of such forces. This would allow the Hungarian Government to abide by the unofficial Hungarian statement, made early last year in the presence of a British official in Istanbul, to the effect that *Hungary would offer no resistance to the Anglo-Saxon armed forces*, providing—naturally—that such forces consist of regular troops and not partisans, Chetniks, or similar groups of Yugoslavs or Romanians.*

Moreover, the Hungarian Government *endorses unreservedly the clauses of the Atlantic Charter* and is wholly ready to offer its collaboration in the re-establishment of peace and the stabilisation of South-Eastern Europe.

The Hungarian Government has full confidence in the wisdom and high principles of the governments of Great Britain and the United States, and would be happy to enjoy their confidence in turn.

Following this, the memorandum explains at length all the efforts made up to that point by the Kállay cabinet with the intention of making a *de facto* withdrawal from the war, and notes that at present, among all the small

* Already in the summer of 1943, I forwarded, in accordance with Colonel Kádár, a verbal message relayed to the British military in Istanbul by my wife, according to which we were ready to receive and shelter Allied parachutists charged with preparing the landing of their troops. But it was only on March 16, 1944, three days before the occupation of the country by the Germans, that three officers were parachuted in.

countries under German domination, ours is the only one no longer engaged on the front lines. We only had nine divisions in the Ukraine, reduced to their peacetime complement, charged with keeping order behind the front lines; all our efforts to bring them home remained fruitless, but we had no intention of wavering from our goal. Based on these facts, it describes the hope of Prime Minister Kállay that the Russians will abstain from attacking Hungary, because only an eventual onslaught expressly directed against our country would trigger a feeling of *self-defence*, explained in the memorandum as “the most natural of human instincts”, and would oblige us to counterattack. In no case would we launch an attack against the Russians.

Meanwhile, the memorandum explains, “[t]hese considerations evidently do not prevent the Hungarian Government from observing with keen attention the on-going efforts to find a Finno-Russian peace settlement. The assumptions of the Hungarian Government and Hungarians in general regarding Russian vengefulness towards certain nations could be favourably influenced by evidence in the on-going negotiations that the Russian demands do not compromise the honour and vital interests of their adversary.”

Meanwhile, until the arrival of an Anglo-American army, it would be best for the Allies to leave Hungary alone. For if they rushed things under the present circumstances, and especially if they continued with aerial bombing raids, the Kállay cabinet, portrayed as pro-Allies in the country, could not survive, the consequences being that with the Allies far away and the Germans close by, power would inevitably pass to the factions of the right hostile to the Allies. “Since these factions” the Memorandum continues, “are all in the pay of the Germans, Hungarians would wake up to find that the Germans had seized everything of value—army, agriculture, mines, oil wells—in Hungary. And the Allies, similarly caught unawares, would then face a Hungary that no longer awaits them as friends and liberators, but has become wholly subservient to the German war machine.”

In the end, the memorandum points out that: “Hungary serves the Allied cause in many indirect ways. To cite a few practical examples: 1) A large part of our grain production and animal stock is concealed and does not figure in official statistics, thus escaping German demands. 2) Our oil production is also concealed as far as possible. We have considerable oil resources that are not exploited so as to keep them out of German hands. 3) We try to deny the Germans as far as possible the use of our territory for the marshalling of troops and war material, for the building of

fortifications and command posts, and in general to establish staging posts. 4) We prevent the Germans from recruiting Hungarian manpower to staff their war industries. Among the countries linked to Germany, Hungary has the fewest workers in the Reich. 5) We prevent the Germans from enriching themselves at the expense of our Jewish population. 6) We give shelter to Polish soldiers whose numbers amount to at least two divisions, and who are at the disposal of the Allies. 7) Our railroads sabotage German troop transport as far as possible. (The proportion of such transports passing through Budapest has been reduced to some 6%.) 8) Similarly, the productivity of our war industries is kept at a very low level in relative terms. 9) The Reich's share in our exports is no greater, on average, than that of neutral countries. 10) Last but not least, we are preserving our capability in order to ensure that with the approach of Anglo-American armies, Hungary will be lost to Germany."

The memorandum ends by noting that *this collective work of sabotage, put in effect by the whole country, weighs far heavier in the balance than some individual acts of sabotage in certain other countries.*

In making my report on the delivery of this memorandum to the Allies, I submitted to Prime Minister Kállay the six following propositions:¹²

1. Please ascertain that other Hungarian representatives who find themselves in contact with the Allies adhere to the present offer, to avoid overbidding.
2. Everyone knows that the evacuation of Budapest is underway, at least in the sense that certain offices and state institutions are being transferred to the provinces. One could therefore come to the conclusion that we are expecting aerial bombing raids. If Your Excellency judges it truly necessary to take such measures, then there would be every advantage in carrying them out as discreetly as possible, to avoid giving the impression that we are panic-stricken.
3. The same recommendation to attract as little attention as possible applies to the occupation of the Carpathian line by our troops.
4. I also recommend for Your Excellency to entirely *depoliticize* the Hungarian press and Hungarian propaganda.

5. Please send me at the earliest possible time, despite the understandable difficulties, the information concerning the military, which I had requested from Szegedy-Maszák.
6. I draw the attention of Your Excellency to the vital importance of preventing the Germans from settling in our country by all means possible.

The response of Prime Minister Kállay is dated March 3, 1944. After expressing his complete approval of the way I was dealing with the representative of the Allied Chiefs of Staff, he made the following observations concerning my propositions:

ad 1.

Agreed.

ad 2.

Our procedures for evacuation have above all the aim of calming the population, unaware of what is going on behind the scenes. We are thinking of first evacuating the children. Besides, failing a positive assurance from the Allies, the Government could not accept responsibility for not having taken any preventive measures.

ad 3.

Agreed. Preparations for defence are already taking their course.

ad 4. and 6.

We are doing everything possible as recommended.

ad 5.

I must emphasize that we have little knowledge on the subject of the questions posed. The situation in this connection has not yet noticeably improved. I think it is better to tell the truth than to raise false hopes."

I responded in the same dispatch that his argument concerning the fifth proposition did not suffice; I therefore insisted one should take this matter very seriously, for the information required was the starting point of our much desired collaboration with the Allies.

The post dispatched, I would have been surprised, had a celestial voice revealed to me that it was to be the very *last* diplomatic bag sent to the Ministry under my care. By that I do not at all mean to say that I had not

foreseen the possibility of a German assault on Hungary; indeed I had seen it coming, but thought it would be only later. This same bag took a letter from me to Prime Minister Kállay on this subject, a letter which includes the following passages of interest:

These past days, I am particularly preoccupied by the thought that when our General Chief of Staff, on the day of his last visit to the *Hauptquartier*, explained to the Germans that we wanted an independent defence along the Carpathians—which would necessitate the withdrawal of our troops along these lines—the German General Chief of Staff bluntly refused even to tackle this subject, under the pretext that it was completely out of the question that the Russian advance would reach that far. I am convinced that in holding this point of view, the Germans already knew that they were not telling the truth, because they were bound to accept the possibility that the Russian advance would reach the Carpathians. I even have the strong feeling that they considered the Carpathians as their last *line of resistance* to the East, and that all their plans for its defence were in place well before the visit of General Szombathelyi. It is precisely because these plans were contrary to our interests that they so diligently avoided discussing this difficult question, by maintaining quite simply that the case would not arise. *As far as I am concerned, I absolutely refuse to believe that the Germans would accept that we should be the sole defenders of this line, which for them is of utmost importance.*

It was Kristóf Kállay, son of the Prime Minister, who responded to my letter by return post with the following words: “My father wants you to know that you see the situation very clearly; he views it in the same way and *is very pessimistic...*”

Indeed, Kállay had every reason to be pessimistic, because, at the very instant that letter arrived, the morning of Monday, March 20, 1944, he was no longer Prime Minister, but a persecuted outcast, as the occupation of Hungary had already been completed. As for me, I no longer had a government to represent in Sweden.

However, at that moment, we knew nothing of this in Stockholm.

B

IN DISSIDENCE

The first real news about the occupation of Hungary by the Germans, which took place on March 19, 1944, reached me on the evening of the 21st, when I received a coded telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the following text:

Exung

Stockholm

Would you immediately confirm receipt of my telegram No 41 dispatched yesterday in which I informed you about the occupation of Hungary following a sudden German attack. 42 *Aussenministerium*.

(This telegram was signed *Aussenministerium*, that is, in German, against all regulations, probably so that the Germans would let it pass.)

I forthwith sent back the following response:

Exung

Budapest

Statissime. Response to your telegram No 42. Telegram No 41 did not arrive. Please note—to Prime Minister Kállay, too, when communicating with him, wherever he may be—that I, constitutional Minister of an independent Hungary, refuse to bow before any *putsch* and that I consider it my duty to fight back the invaders with all my might until the complete liberation of our country.

Ullein-Reviczky

I then asked all members of the Legation, except for the military attachés, to come to my office, where I read them the two telegrams and then asked if they shared my point of view. Upon their affirmative response, I asked my first secretary to post my response. From that point on, I became a dissident.

Finally, the following evening, Wednesday, March 22, 1944, *Radio Budapest* announced the formation of a “new cabinet”, noting in passing

that the Kállay cabinet had “resigned”. This “new cabinet”, presided over by the arch-Nazi Döme Sztójay, until then Minister in Berlin, and composed of kindred characters, hastily published the text of the so-called “accord” reached with Germany on the subject of the entry into Hungary of German troops to “protect” the country from the dangers of war. The fact that Hungary had plainly been attacked and occupied by the Germans well before the formation of the famous “cabinet”, during which time the Regent was being detained by Hitler and that his entire gang of quislings had been forced upon the country by its aggressors, was carefully disregarded.

I immediately got in contact by telephone with the Swedish telegraphic agency and dictated the following declaration:

This so-called Hungarian government is illegal. In a constitutional state such as Hungary, parachutists of a foreign country cannot overthrow the legal government and it is not up to the whim of the invaders to determine the composition of a new cabinet. Evidently, the present Hungarian government was forced upon the country in the absence of the Regent, under the threat of terror and intimidation. Today Hungary is subject to a dictatorship that relies on the bayonets of its invaders.

The following morning Swedish newspapers published this declaration as a front-page story and generally made Hungary a major news item, though without any precise information, the Germans having meticulously sealed the country's borders. What most interested me in this sad affair—once the occupation had become an accomplished fact—was to know if on the Hungarian side there had at least been an attempt to resist the invaders. I longed to know what role the Regent had played in this entire catastrophe, as one could take it for granted that the occupation could never have taken place with his consent. If already in 1943 he had described Hitler as a *gangster*, what might he think of him now?

These questions were of importance, as there was no doubt that the Allies would judge Hungary according to the attitude of its people and that of its Regent. Despite all the hardships of a foreign occupation, I thought to myself, destiny had now dealt us a trump card, and much would depend on how the nation would be able to use it. About this we were all convinced, but ultimately we were not any better informed than the

Swedish journalists or allies who kept telephoning the Legation and my residence to learn more.

I provided another declaration to the *Svenska Dagbladet*, which appeared in the March 26 issue of this famous Swedish national daily, making the case that Hungary was now *under enemy occupation* because through its aggression, Germany became *ipso facto* the enemy of Hungary. The installation of a quisling government and the retention of the Regent—who was completely powerless and isolated from the world—did nothing to change these facts.

On March 24 I received three telegrams from Budapest, they read as follows:

The first:

Exung

Stockholm

1354. Would you inform the government of Sweden of the constitution of the new cabinet. *Sztójay*.

The second:

Exung
Stockholm

Responding to your telegram of the 21st. By order of His Serene Highness the Regent, Antal Ullein-Reviczky is relieved of his post as Minister of Hungary in Stockholm. Consequently, I invite Ullein-Reviczky to hand over the regular leadership of the Legation, as well as all official diplomatic protocol, to a career civil servant who will assume the interim management, and to abstain from all official activities from now on. For having violated his oath of office, Ullein-Reviczky is deleted from the ranks of government officials. He has no right to a pension. Confirm reception of this telegram and report on the execution of its contents. 1364. *Sztójay*.

The third:

Exung

Stockholm

Following my telegram No 1364, the Royal Hungarian Government acting in accordance with Paragraph 8 of Article 13 of the 1939 Constitution, had deprived Antal Ullein-Reviczky of his Hungarian nationality as of March 24. 1375. *Sztójay*.

On the basis of the first telegram, I immediately sent a note to Mr. Christian Günther,¹³ Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, to make the official announcement that Hungary had fallen victim to German aggression and, consequently, the so-called government installed in Budapest by the aggressors could not be called legal. I therefore asked the government of His Swedish Majesty not to recognize this government and to continue to consider me as the representative of the constitutional Hungarian State.

As for the second and third telegrams, I kept them as souvenirs without attaching the slightest importance to them.¹⁴

Meanwhile, almost all the diplomatic and consular representatives living in countries where their liberty was not constrained broke away from the government to protest against the occupation of Hungary and the accession of the quislings to power. These were—apart from myself and the consuls of Hungary in Sweden—the ministers in Helsinki, Berne, Madrid, Lisbon, at the Vatican, the chargé d'affaires in Buenos Aires, the consul generals in Istanbul, Geneva, Athens and the consul in Zürich. The minister of Hungary in Athens and his counsellor managed to escape from Greece and sent us a telegram of solidarity from Cairo. Later, some other Hungarian diplomats accredited to the Axis and Vichy countries managed also to escape to neighbouring neutral countries, from which they rallied to our movement.

To organize all these people, we formed a *Committee of Dissident Ministers* and asked our most senior minister, Mr. György Barcza, former minister of Hungary to London, who unofficially lived in Switzerland, to take on the presidency. Nevertheless, this organization was more symbolic than real, given the difficulties of keeping in touch with its members

scattered all over the world. We therefore contented ourselves by agreeing on the general principles of our collaboration, which was quickly done, and after that everyone arranged his life as best he could.

In this new situation, my efforts to enter into personal relations with the diplomatic representatives of the Great Allied Powers in Stockholm had been delayed. I was first received by *Sir Victor Mallet*,¹⁵ Minister of His Britannic Majesty, then by *Herschel V. Johnson*,¹⁶ and finally by Madame *Alexandra Kollontay*,¹⁷ Ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I also called on Count *Vaux de Saint-Cyr*, plenipotentiary Minister representing the “French Committee of National Liberation”, and on Mr. *Henryk Sokolnicki*, plenipotentiary Minister, chargé d’affaires of Poland. I was warmly welcomed everywhere and in the aftermath received from the representatives of the Allied Powers all the help and understanding I needed to attain goals common to all great democracies.

My relations with the Swedish government also advanced in the most satisfactory manner. The Minister of Foreign Affairs assured me that they would continue to recognize me as Minister and would refuse to acknowledge a quisling Hungarian envoy. However, given that the Swedish Legation had not left Hungary, I was immediately informed that the government of the King would not be able to stop the quisling Hungarians from sending an *ad interim* chargé d’affaires who, however, would only carry out administrative tasks and would not have access to the Hungarian minister’s residence, which I continued to occupy. This suited me perfectly.

I thus had access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Palace, just as before. And it is with gratitude that I shall always remember one of the members of the royal house of Sweden, Prince *Carl Johan* (today living in the United States under the name of Mr. Bernadotte¹⁸ following his marriage to one of our charming Swedish lady friends),¹⁹ who organized, a few weeks after my defection, a dinner at the Royal Palace with a view to putting me in touch with the representatives of the Allied Powers. As I was alone, apart from the three Great Allies, it was difficult to give this initiative any other interpretation.

I was delighted that my breaking-away brought with it a change of company, as nothing had been more painful during my official functions than to be placed in the Axis camp with whom I had nothing at all in common.

Now I could speak and act openly, something I did not hesitate to do. First, I gave interviews to most of the national newspapers, as well as to the correspondents of some English and American newspapers, interviews in which I touched upon some of the failings of Nazi Germany, and I certainly knew where to find them! Next, I organized in one of Stockholm's most popular Catholic churches a Requiem Mass for the Hungarian victims of Nazi aggression. Nearly all Stockholm's national newspapers published articles and included photographs taken at the scene. I even carried out a change on the Hungarian flag: having declared that I was no longer willing to make use of the same flag which the quislings were using against the Allies, I had the white central band embroidered in gold with angels flanking the crown of Saint Stephen, holding it aloft with the words *Pro Libertate*, which had been the rallying cry of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II against the "invaders" of the time, the soldiers of the "Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation".

That was more than enough to completely infuriate the Nazis; and they missed no opportunity to strike back at me, using all the means at their disposal. Unable to reach me otherwise, they hurled abuse at me in their press with the spirit that characterizes them in everything, except in things of an honourable nature. In their zeal to impress their masters, they even greatly exaggerated the importance of my position. As for me, I took care not to default either by exaggeration or by false modesty. I have reduced to a strict minimum the reproduction of these attacks in the press, which could easily have filled a volume. It will suffice to include short summaries of the articles in question, as they were prepared at the time by my services in Stockholm for distribution to diplomatic missions:

Summary of Attacks in the Hungarian Nazi Press and Radio
against Antal Ullein-Reviczky²⁰

Magyarság (The Hungarian)
March 30, 1944

Editorial by Kálmán Rátkay,²¹ editor of the newspaper and one of the most fanatical Hungarian Nazi journalists, on the three Hungarian diplomats who first broke with the Sztójay regime. "Without any doubt, the most outstanding personality of this renegade group, and at the same time the most dangerous of the

three, is Antal Ullein-Reviczky, former chief of the Press Bureau and, for some time, our Minister in Sweden.” He continues: “The treachery of Ullein-Reviczky *did not surprise us at all*.”

Új Magyarország (The new Hungarian)

March 31, 1944.

In an article entitled “The *Wilhelmstrasse* considers the situation in Hungary stabilised,” the journal reports from Berlin the opinion of the German Chief of Press, Paul Schmidt, on Ullein-Reviczky. According to the journal, Mr. Schmidt affirmed, among other things, that the “*present activity of the former chief of the Hungarian press is merely a logical extension of his previous intrigues*”.

Függetlenség (Independence)*

April 5, 1944

A long article on the subject of the memorandum of pro-German members of the *Magyar Élet Pártja* (Governmental party), which in February of this year was handed to the then president of the party. The heading of the memorandum concerning the defeatism of the press is being referred to here: “A remarkable change has been noticed concerning the directing of the press during the past years. *Only since the former Chief of Press (Antal Ullein-Reviczky) left, could a change for the better be discerned.*”

Új Magyaróság

April 9, 1944

Publishes a declaration by the former *Arrow Cross* deputy and well-known Nazi leader, András Mecsér,²² in which he states that when Kállay wished to negotiate with him, Mecsér’s condition was that the Chief of the Press Bureau, Ullein-Reviczky, should first be dismissed. Negotiations were discontinued, as the Premier refused to discuss this condition.

* Clippings in this section marked with an asterisk, “*”, were not in the original published French volume *Guerre allemande, paix russe*, and have been added from Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation Archives.

Budapest Értésítő (Budapest reporter)*
April 18, 1944

The mimeographed *Budapest Értésítő* published the declaration of Ullein-Reviczky in the *Svenska Dagbladet* concerning the liberation of Hungary from Nazi domination, which it sharply condemns as treacherous.

*Függetlenség**
April 21, 1944

Along with several other papers, relates the affair of the Combatants' Union, the substance of which is that the entire board of presidents resigned when Ullein-Reviczky, who was co-president of the Union, was deprived of his Hungarian citizenship. Amongst the resigning board members were four deputies, Count József Takách-Tolvay (president), vitéz András Tóth, vitéz Imre Martsekényi and Dr. Lajos Mezey (vice-presidents). At the same time these gentlemen left the Government Party.

*Új Magyarország**
April 21, 1944

A caricature titled "The Bakony Parade" shows Ullein-Reviczky as captain of the "Bakony Partisans" mounted on a horse and accompanied by his followers representing different social classes. The caption, in Hungarian, reads: "*These are the famous Bakony partisans with Antal Zsigmond Ullein-Reviczky as their captain...*"²³

*Új Magyarország**
April 30, 1944

Publishes a report of Ullein-Reviczky's nightly orgies in the Cecil Bar, even though he had never set foot in any of Stockholm's nightclubs.

Függetlenség
May 12, 1944

Together with other Nazi papers, *Függetlenség* reports that Ullein-Reviczky absconded to London, taking with him the Legation's coffers!

*Magyarság**

May 13, 1944

Fabricates a story about Ullein-Reviczky's arrival in London and activities there.

Magyarság

May 18, 1944

Writing about the anti-Nazi movement, Edmond (Ödön) Málnási,²⁴ historian of the Hungarian Nazi Party, states that everything, in the country, was drowned by the deafening noise caused by an orchestra conducted by the “Vansittart–Ullein-Reviczky duo” (sic)!²⁵

*Új Magyarság**

May 23, 1944

An ironic article asserting that as the English did not allow Ullein-Reviczky to travel to England, he is now planning to embark on guerrilla warfare. The former Chief of Press held council in secret meetings about political tactics and strategies, excluding from the gathering all pro-Nazi deputies.

*Magyarság**

May 24, 1944

Ullein-Reviczky has returned from London to Stockholm with all the funds, and has now used the money to win over members of the legation.

*Függetlenség**

May 24, 1944

Writes that Ullein-Reviczky used to wave a swastika flag to German ships from his Budapest apartment.

Új Magyarság

May 25, 1944

Speaking of Ullein-Reviczky's “treachery”, it states, among other things: “This passionate champion of independence who, while at

home, made such beautiful speeches about clinging to our ancient traditions and about fighting foreign influences to the very last, has done everything imaginable to serve England, and had done so even from his post in Stockholm. He has shown an eagerness in this that makes it seem as if Churchill had himself commissioned him to change Hungarian foreign policy.”

*Új Magyarország**

June 2, 1944

Former Air Force Captain Vince Görgey, who sold himself to the Germans and became one of the most enthusiastic Nazi journalists, in a long lead article passes the harshest judgement on the policies of the past and says among other things: “Lately the coteries which have betrayed our people and our country openly declared that we were not concerned with the war of the Germans and tried to prove ever more aggressively that we did not want to fight side by side with our allies. They proclaimed to the world that we were not at war [...] Keresztes-Fischer, Ullein-Reviczky, Sombor-Schweinitzer, Ujszászy, Wodianer and their Jewish and aristocratic fellow criminals had only one aim: to allow anything to happen, as long as National Socialism can be prevented from winning.”

*Új Magyarország**

June 2, 1944

Reporting on the speech given in Szombathely by the quisling Minister of Interior, the article mentions agitation in Hungary before the German occupation and the direction of the press during that period, emphasizing that a spiritual reign of terror had descended on the country, and this wretched state of affairs was viewed with approval, and behind closed doors even encouraged and egged on by Antal Ullein-Reviczky and his ilk, who have since torn off their masks. The article further stresses: “From political dailies to theatrical magazines, a well-planned strategic offensive had been conducted by the bourgeois and radical press.”

Új Magyarország
June 10, 1944

A sharp attack against those elements from whom the unflinching champions of nationalist-socialist ideas today receive a flood of anonymous letters, full of the most savage threats, demands of accountability, promises of future punishment and general shaking of fists. It mentions that “democratic and pro-English circles” send thousands of death threats daily and continues: *“This comes from being able, until now, to do as they please; it comes from swollen heads and a vanity grossly flattered by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, who kept them in the warm nest of illusory thinking, so that even now they believe that a change might come and things may take a new turn [...] and so on and so forth.”*

Új Magyaróság
June 18, 1944

István Milotay,²⁶ the editor responsible for the newspaper, and his deputy, Virginio Gayda,²⁷ covering the Hungarian Nazis, lash out in an editorial on the *Ullein-Reviczky spirit*.

Új Magyaróság
July 14, 1944

In its lead editorial, the paper furiously attacks the Swedish press for the hostile reception it accorded Sztójay’s representative. The paper takes offense at the Swedish press, which *“only wants to recognize one Hungarian Minister, namely the traitor Antal Ullein-Reviczky”*. It continues not without a certain ruefulness: *“It is him they applaud, it is his praises they sing nonstop!”*

*Új Magyaróság**
July 19, 1944

Reports from Berlin that: “Ullein-Reviczky has grown very quiet in Stockholm.” The correspondent attributes this silence to the fact that all the fiery declarations he sent home were wasted on the desert air. Not one “Tony-partisan”²⁸ rose to follow him from the woods of the Bakony Mountains, nor did the Magyars of the

Great Hungarian Plain shoulder their hacks and scythes and heed inflammatory calls to arms.

Új Magyarország
August 5, 1944

The Nazi deputy István Milotay devotes an editorial titled “Free Hungarians”, to a ferocious attack on Hungarian dissident diplomats, pouring venomous abuse on their heads, calling them members of the *Ullein-Reviczky school*.

Harc (Combat)
August 12, 1944

The anti-Semitic broadside *Harc* violently attacks the 213 Jewish journalists tolerated by the previous government, who will now have to be eliminated. The writer fails to understand why these Jewish journalists had not resigned of their own accord; they should have realized *that the last gasp of Hungarian Judaism, made possible by Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Kállay’s government, cannot last very long now*.

This leaflet, hinting at racial extermination, was not mistaken, at least in the sense that I did do everything in my power—with the support and knowledge of Prime Minister Kállay—to save as many Jews as possible. I might add that during the Kállay regime this was not very difficult, despite the various laws already in force, which humiliated Jewish Hungarians and reduced them to second-class citizens. Let me explain: if in addition to the 213 Jewish journalists mentioned above, the Nazis during the occupation could have eliminated, for the sole reason that they were of different faith, 38,9% of all doctors, 52,1% of all lawyers, 35,4% of all veterinarians and 26,9% of all Budapest pharmacists, then this speaks of the fact these journalists, doctors, lawyers, veterinarians and pharmacists, who were Jewish or of Jewish origin, were still alive and unharmed. Moreover, if it was possible for the Nazis to confiscate, in Budapest alone, 18,000 shops and 28,000 apartment buildings from Jews, that means of course that before the occupation, said Jews were still the owners of these shops and apartment houses. If they had only let them live! However the bloody fury of the Nazis knew no limits. Of the 800,000 Jews in Hungary, the quisling Hungarians

handed over more than half of them to the Germans; all the Jews from the provinces were forthwith transported to the extermination camps.²⁹

Those in the capital gained a grace period, due to the presence of Regent Horthy, whom the Nazis thought it imprudent to irritate unduly; but their lives became very different from what it had been before. After having been forced to evacuate their homes within a few hours, they were boarded pell-mell, like livestock, into the worst neighbourhoods of Budapest, which were transformed into *ghettos*, where they were virtual prisoners, with no right to leave their miserable dwellings, except for indispensable errands, and even those only at ungodly hours. Naturally, they all had to wear the yellow star and had to watch out if they so much as attempted to get into contact with “Aryans”. Nevertheless, even this was better than being thrown into the gas chambers, to be incinerated afterwards. Budapest Jews vegetated like this, as long as the Regent remained in his post. When, on the first day of the Szálasi *putsch* in October 1944, the Regent was deposed and sent to Germany, they, too, were forced to share the tragic fate of their fellow Jews in the provinces.

From the very beginning of the persecutions I believed it was my duty to make use of all the influence I had with the Swedish government to make sure there would be some intervention coming from that government on behalf of Hungarian Jewry. Indeed, the high moral authority that Sweden—with good reason—enjoyed, as well as the rich mineral resources at its disposal, made it particularly qualified for such a humanitarian mission. I therefore wrote the following letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs:³⁰

His Excellency, Mr. *Christian Günther*,
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Stockholm, April 8, 1944

Mr. Minister,

I am taking the liberty of appealing to Your Excellency and, through you, to the entire Royal Swedish Government,³¹ in a cause that the humanitarian sentiments of my nation and the noble traditions of millennial Hungary allow me to represent, that of the Jews of Hungary. As a consequence of the German occupation of my

country, some 800,000 Hungarians of Jewish religion or ascendancy have been subjected to unprecedented and inhuman persecution. I think I need not relate for Your Excellency details that have been amply reported by the press, among them the decrees, designed to regulate the so-called Jewish question, that were issued by the self-professed government in Budapest, actually an executive organ of the occupying power.

These decrees, Mr. Minister, are wholly illegal, for such a drastic intrusion into the life of citizens would have to be legislated—though even that is far-fetched—and cannot be enacted by simple “governmental” decrees that have no justification in any Hungarian laws pertaining to Jews. These are purely arbitrary acts!

However, the foregoing is largely a matter of Hungarian domestic legality. What is, in my view, of more immediate interest for those who still respect human rights and are motivated by love of their fellow man is the clear evidence that in the centre of Europe, 800,000 human beings face martyrdom.

May I, Mr. Minister, express the hope that the Swedish Government, which has given ample evidence of humanitarian sentiments, will not be indifferent to the fate of these poor people? Allow me to urge, Excellency, that the Royal Government respond to this new wave of human suffering by raising its voice in defence of the persecuted, and by taking all measures and initiatives it considers appropriate to alleviate the situation of my Jewish countrymen.

With apologies for having taken your time in this matter, Mr. Minister, I want to assure you of my highest esteem.

A. Ullein-Reviczky³²

I hasten to add my conviction that the Swedish government would certainly not have waited to do whatever it thought was necessary to help the Jews, even had I not appealed to them. Today, Sweden’s universally acknowledged action, starting with the personal intervention of H.M. King Gustav and going as far as the establishment in Budapest of a Swedish emergency organisation, has gone down in history. I would hope, nevertheless, that no one would deny me the right to recall with emotion my request, which was a first step, a first impetus on the road to rescue.

Certainly, not only Jews need to be wrested from the iron grip of the Nazis. All who were even suspected of the vaguest resistance to Nazism were doomed. All parties or political groups not on the right were forced to disband; all independent newspapers and periodicals were banned; all associations apart from the Nazis (in the thousands in Hungary) were dissolved; the army, the police, the constabulary, state and municipal civil services were all subjected to the most severe purges; the railroads, riverine transport, and all industrial enterprises, placed under German control; and, finally, all those who did not suit the Germans or the quisling Hungarians were arrested and deported to Germany.

Under these circumstances, what could be the duty of Hungarian patriots? Without any doubt: *to resist*. However to resist does not always mean: to expose oneself and one's family to certain death, the fatal consequence of any attempt to oppose force with force. Every conceivable technique of resistance had already been tried in other occupied countries, with secret cells, underground fighters, rapid and audacious attacks, mysterious acts of sabotage, etc. One was spoiled for choice. I, too, strove to send messages back to the country to incite some lightning blows as soon as possible. Because there was *periculum in mora*.³³ Indeed it would have been very dangerous to give the Allies the impression that the country had accepted its lot and had, willy-nilly, sided with the Nazis' idea of a *New Europe*.

Yet weeks passed and no word of any real resistance reached us. I attributed this deficiency to the terror and acts of cruelty raging in the country, for it was not necessary to prove that the great majority of the nation found the Germans odious. Even before the occupation, they were, to say the least, hardly popular, and afterwards they did everything possible to infuriate decent Hungarians. Yet these decent Hungarians were apparently not prepared to die, which did not help their standing in the eyes of the Allies.

Later, I understood more clearly and realized that the real reason for the slowness of the resistance to the Germans was, even more than Nazi terror, fear of the Russians. The following narrative goes to show the extent of the fear felt by the nation:

Under the bloody regime of the *Arrow Cross*, a young Hungarian Jew, having succeeded in escaping from one of Szálasi's concentration camps—hence the antechamber of death—landed, after an adventurous passage, safe and sound in Sweden.³⁴ He immediately came to see me and, having told me of his ordeal, explained that the worst of all that he had suffered

was the long retreat, from Poland to Hungary, that he had covered with the Hungarian army, where he was assigned to a Jewish work detail. This was under the Sztójay government, so already at the height of the period of pogroms. “But” I said to him, “I no longer understand any of this. Did you not have the opportunity, you and your friends, during this long retreat to flee the Russians?” “Yes, sir”, was the reply, “we were not short of opportunities; nobody paid any attention to us.” “So you did not want to?” I insisted. “To tell the truth, sir,” he responded, “we did not want to, *because we were terribly afraid of the Russians.*”

That unsettled me. Afraid of the Russians! That a Hungarian officer would fear them—to the extent that it is admissible for a soldier to fear anything—still appeared to me to be logical; that a soldier who believed everything he was told should fear them, that still makes sense, but that a Jew on a work detail, under a Nazi regime, would rather endure suffering and humiliation than decamp to the Russians, who ought to have greeted him with open arms—this was beyond my imagination. Later, having received more detailed accounts of the way the country was liberated, the strange confession of my young Jewish compatriot seemed less and less implausible. However, at the time of our encounter, I considered it inadmissible that those who had liberated us from our Nazi tormentors should be characterized as a menace. So I publicly opposed this inclination wherever I came across it.

C

LAST ASSAULT OF THE WAR

During August 1944, with the Red Army at Hungary’s front door and the Germans preparing Budapest for a siege, there remained only one thing to do: drive away the quisling Sztójay and end the fight that very instant. If, as a result of this gesture, the Germans were to clamp down on Hungary, one must in the end, at the last hour, take every one of those risks for the country to survive. This duty was above all incumbent on the Regent; this ultimate service rendered to the country should be the most supremely significant of his life.

I therefore decided to contact him despite all that had happened. To be sure that my letter would reach him, I sent it to his only surviving son,

Miklós. As for the Swedes, they guaranteed that my missive would leave immediately—through safe channels—and that it would be handed over to the addressee without delay. Here is the text:

Stockholm, August 20, 1944

Mr. Miklós Horthy Junior,
Plenipotentiary Minister

Royal Palace
Budapest

Top Secret
By hand.

My dear Niki,

I am taking this favourable opportunity to send you the enclosed letter. I request that, after having read it, you show it to your father, as—in truth—it is to him that it is addressed. What I am about to say may have consequences of the utmost importance for the future of our country.

You are certainly not unaware of the fact that the former Prime Minister, Mr. Miklós Kállay, and his entire circle of friends, clearly saw that Germany would lose the war. It was therefore evident to them that it was the attitude of the Allies and not of the Reich, which would be decisive for Hungary's fate. The logical conclusion of this conviction is that we must take great care not to break off relations with the Allies despite the *formal* state of war that separates us. Mr. Kállay reached this conclusion and adhered to the following line of conduct: 1. He stopped the expansion of Nazism in the country and never moved away from the parliamentary system. 2. It was only against communism that he adopted a hostile attitude and never considered the Allied Powers enemies of Hungary. 3. He had a compassionate attitude towards the Jews. 4. He resisted all German demands, including military demands. 5. He evoked, in a series of public pronouncements, Hungary's attachment to its independence. 6. He saw to it that Hungary—contrary to Germany and its satellites—showed, in all respects, evidence of civilized conduct.

I have been able to note here that the Allied circles were not unmindful of these Hungarian political efforts. Naturally, they had some criticisms, but they seemed to understand that it was only at the cost of some concessions to Germany that we were able to avoid the worst disaster: the *occupation of our country*.

However this policy entailed a natural consequence; which was that if despite everything the Germans were to attack and occupy us, we would not hesitate to resist. I add that no one asked us to allow ourselves to be massacred, as there are various forms of resistance. Meanwhile, all the Allies—and even the neutrals—could expect that the Hungarian nation would find a way to show proof of some spontaneous resistance, to demonstrate to the whole world that our people do not accept to be treated in such an ignoble manner. This attitude would have conformed not only to the patriotic sentiments and the upright character of our people, but also to our obvious interests. Our resistance would have made the Germans our enemies and the Allies—quite logically—our saviours. This clearly reverberated in the public message addressed to Hungary by Cordell Hull³⁵ following the occupation. All the miseries and atrocities were duly noted and credited to us. When the time comes and the scores are settled we should therefore be on the right side as creditors, and not on the wrong side, as debtors.

Unfortunately, this vital, nay, indispensable resistance was not forthcoming. Hungary—at least *official* Hungary—behaved in a passive manner. We did not take action against the invaders, even though the thousand-year-old Constitution of the country was torn to shreds, and repeated breaches of the law and crimes of every description sullied the soul of the homeland. With this attitude, we managed to turn the Allies into our enemies, and this time for good. During all of its thousand-year history, never has our nation shown such sluggishness. To justify this attitude, the one and only excuse we can submit is the danger of *Bolshevism*. But this Bolshevik menace, should it really exist, will only increase with our hostile acts against the Allies, which includes of course Soviet Russia. If, by consequence, we hasten to attack the Russians to please the Germans, this danger will become formidable, but if we resist the Germans, it will almost be invalidated.

I am well aware of all our external and internal difficulties; it is therefore not necessary to recall them now, all the less since they count for nothing today. Only one thing counts: the salvation of the *nation*, and that salvation requires that instead of waging war on behalf of the Germans, we make a final effort to regain the respect of the conquerors of tomorrow. There is not a moment to lose because the Hitlerian Reich is on the verge of collapse. As for the Germans who attacked us so brutally, plundered and ruined us, we owe them absolutely nothing. To even speak of the “loyalty due to an ally”, after all that has taken place, strikes me as a bad joke. We are shouting out from all the rooftops that the nation is in danger. It is, truly, in mortal danger; and why? Because we are still following the Germans down the road leading to catastrophe. The slogan “Vanquish or Die” could not be a governmental programme, because to *vanquish* as an ally of Germany is impossible, and as for *dying*, well, the nation does not want to hear of it, therefore it will not die, of that you can be sure!

Today, your father is the only one who can still act. Only he has the necessary authority and legal power. However I stress, beforehand, that political actions such as the recent dismissal of the *Imrédy* ministers no longer suffice: today, one must make a grand decisive gesture for the world to understand, and without regard for the momentary problems it could create. I therefore propose that your father should kindly act as follows:

1. Drive out the disreputable Sztójay government and form another composed of reliable persons. He should annul all the quisling's measures. The sole political programme: to save the nation. If the Germans oppose it, he should still fight them, even if there is no chance of success. The Allies will help us.
2. Bring to the attention of the Allies, through the intermediary of a neutral government or of neutral ministers in Budapest, that he does not want to go to war against them on the contrary, he requests their aid against the German occupiers.
3. Proceed in such a way that the troops receive corresponding orders.

In acting as above, Hungary could still be saved. If, on the other hand, you continue to serve the Germans, we are lost.”

Your devoted friend who sends heartfelt greetings.

Antal Ullein-Reviczky

PS. To my letter of August 20:

Since then the Roman capitulation has come about. Now it is no longer in September that we have to take action, but *at once*. By way of the local chargé d'affaires I forwarded a ciphered telegram to His Excellency, the Regent this morning. I only hope that Parcher³⁶ has enough decency to hand it over, and I hope, too, that no one in the Foreign Office will dare “misappropriate” the cable.

In sincere friendship,

Stockholm, August 23, 1944.

*Antal Ullein-Reviczky*³⁷

PS. August 25, 1944. Parcher has definitely refused to hand over my two telegrams to His Excellency, the Regent. He must therefore bear responsibility for any eventual consequence. Would it not be possible to immediately send over a decent person to replace him?³⁸

I hasten to note that this letter was quite severe, but at the moment of its formulation, it was difficult not to put the dot on all the i-s, and cross on all the t-s, given that its main purpose was to shake the Regent.

After waiting for eight days, I received the good news that the Sztójay cabinet had collapsed and the Regent had conferred the task of forming a new government on General Lakatos,³⁹ a loyal officer and confirmed patriot. Another general, Gustav Henneyey,⁴⁰ completely devoted to the new Prime Minister, became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Not a single cabinet member was associated with the Nazi parties, although a few of the pro-German ministers from the previous government were retained. Despite all assurances given to Germany, everyone understood the role of this new government: *to save whatever could still be saved by attempting to end the war, or at least to allow the Regent to act independently.*

Yet the war persisted, and it was already mid-September. I decided to send a second and final message to the Regent to persuade him to make one last significant gesture, at any cost, to show the world that the nation was resolved to cast off the Nazi shackles and to prove that if this had not already occurred, it was only due to the absence of foreign help, as we lacked the necessary force. Given, however, that the occupiers watched the Regent's every step, I thought it best to suggest that he speak on the radio. That might work, provided that he took the utmost care. Once he is in front of the microphone, he could publicly announce his firm intention to end the war without delay—a war into which we would not have been drawn but for Germany's formidable pressure. No doubt that afterwards the Germans would clamp down, but at least the Regent of Hungary would have done his duty towards his people and those of the civilized world.

Having given thought to this, I went to the Swedish *Utrikes* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to Mr. Boheman,⁴¹ Undersecretary of State, and, having explained the situation to him I kindly asked him to assist me by charging the Swedish Minister in Budapest with the responsibility of suggesting the aforesaid to Regent Horthy. I emphasized that such an approach would in no way jeopardize Swedish neutrality because Hungary obviously wanted to halt the killings, and every neutral country had the right to facilitate this outcome. Mr. Boheman very kindly promised to do everything possible.

A few days later, another opportunity arose to send a message to the Regent and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, General Hennyey:

As Finland finally broke away from Nazi Germany, the Axis diplomatic missions left Helsinki, among them the Legation of Hungary. Obviously, this “Hungary” was no longer ours, but that of the quislings, because it was no longer Mr. György Szabó⁴² who headed the legation—he had joined me in Stockholm immediately following the occupation of our country—but Sztójay's envoy, Ferenc Marosy,⁴³ a confirmed Germanophile. When pro-German policy proved utterly flawed, at least Mr. Marosy was one of those who recognized it, and having admitted his error, declared himself ready to do his best to serve the cause of peace. Such was the message he relayed to me. Having weighed the pros and cons, I decided to accept his offer. Everything I had suggested up to the present time, I told myself, be it to the Regent, be it to others, had a weak side, namely that these suggestions had come from me. Indeed, I was so opposed to Germany that I could easily be suspected of being biased. On the other hand, the suggestion

would have quite a different aspect if a man like Marosy, who was still a friend of the Germans, said the same thing. Without a doubt, it would be more convincing. So, having accepted his offer of assistance, I gave him the following instructions:

He should take the first aeroplane to Budapest. Once there, he would have two missions to accomplish.

The first: To explain to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that we must submit without delay a formal request for an armistice to the three major Allies. I am prepared to take on this mission here in Stockholm, without however serving the present Hungarian government. If the Allies, as expected, take this request into consideration, we must act against the Germans exactly as they demand, without recoiling from any sacrifice.

The second: To ask for an audience with the Regent and, having communicated to him what he and General Hennyey have agreed on, he should be reminded that the Germans will surely stop at nothing to prevent us from informing the nation, especially the army, of our request for an armistice. Thus, I consider it inevitable that he take upon himself the supreme risk of announcing the matter, if possible personally, by radio.

Marosy, having promised to follow these instructions to the letter, left the following day on October 3, 1944.

If they had been guilty only of what Admiral Horthy listed in his manifesto, Hungary would have long been right, a thousand times over, to give them the slip. It was a belated recognition, but finally, there it was, the Regent of Hungary found the words he should already have expressed on March 19, 1944!

On October 12, in the afternoon,⁴⁴ the chargé d'affaires of the Budapest government (Parcher), with whom I naturally had no contact, transmitted to me the following encoded telegram which General Hennyey had sent me. The telegram was phrased as follows:

Exung

Stockholm

For Ullein-Reviczky: I received your message. A new situation has arisen, the question is still under close consideration. Please keep in touch. Hennyey.

This telegram told me little. What was this sudden *new situation*? Why was the request for an armistice *still* under close consideration? Questions without answers. However, one thing was clear: at the moment the Hungarian government did not want to act. Since this was the situation, I could only hope that the Regent would better understand the impressive urgency of the situation. He did indeed understand it as I realized three days later, when around five o'clock in the afternoon, I turned on my radio, its dial always set on Budapest.

It was the Regent's proclamation to the nation⁴⁵ on the subject of the armistice, which he had just requested directly of the Russians. The reasons were given with much sincerity, even courage, because this time he did not spare the Germans.

The rest is well-known. The Germans, having got wind of what was coming, had for some time concentrated four armoured divisions around Budapest, and a few hours after the Regent's proclamation, charged into the capital, sweeping away all that was left of old Hungary, beginning with the Regent. In his place they installed a bloodthirsty madman, who had been on their payroll for a long time: Ferenc Szálasi,⁴⁶ the leader of the *Arrow Cross*. He immediately took power, issuing the same evening a counter-manifesto proclaiming all resistance to be under German control and, *last but not least*, delivering to the occupiers everything the quislings had thought worth saving. Hungary now existed in name only.

It had succumbed, the last of Hitler's victims...

D

FAREWELL TO MY CAREER

For a country to be reborn after an almost unparalleled catastrophe, such as suffered by Hungary, there must be *time* to regain its strength, *peace* to undertake the drawn-out process of reconstruction, *consensus* among her sons to work better for the common good, and *freedom* to live.

To do his utmost to help resurrect the mortally wounded *Patria* is a duty incumbent on each citizen worthy of the name.

In my eyes this duty is sacred and I do not intend to fail; but I intend to do it my way.

I have always maintained certain ideas—good and bad—which seemed right to me and which I followed without giving a second thought whether they were included in some government programme, or not.

Thus I have worked for peace when all were at war, and I have always preached concord and moderation when all is but discord and excess.

Imbued with this spirit to rebel against authority, I have felt for a long time that my place was no longer in the diplomatic service. I had nevertheless accepted the post in Stockholm, but only to shelter my family from Hitler, all the while accomplishing a mission I judged important.

Thus, at the first opportunity offered to me to contact the new Hungarian Government—granted me by the Soviet Legation in Sweden—I addressed to them a report of the situation and, to close, I said this:⁴⁷

“For the questions dealt with above, as well as for all other matters, the measures of the honourable government may be communicated to me in Stockholm, during my stay here which, in principle, should end at the same time as the hostilities in Europe. Already at the outset of my diplomatic mission, it was understood that this was to be of a temporary nature. It is, however, useless to emphasize that be it here or elsewhere, and in whatever position, I shall never stop working, as far as possible, for the reconstruction of our country and for the triumph of democracy.”

That was on April 14, 1945.

In July of that year, I left Sweden to come here, to the shores of the Bosphorus, where I still have a home, after having lost everything in Hungary.

One day, by the grace of God, I shall return to my country!⁴⁸



CONCLUSION

To conclude: perhaps it is not useless to summarize the principal ideas, stemming from the analysis of these historic events, with which the reader has been acquainted in considering the preceding pages. Of course these ideas must be examined without taking sides or any other intention, except to illuminate the truth; a goal I set myself before even tackling my subject. Indeed, I was and am absolutely convinced that only if I observe rigorous respect for objectivity can my opinion, with time, be of use to my beleaguered country and to international reconciliation. *With time*, I say, because at present, across almost the entire world, nerves are too overwrought and passions too heated, and newly acquired positions too unstable, for a judgement, rising above the bitterness of the day, to meet with anything but suspicion, indeed hostility. This is especially so in the countries of central and eastern Europe, where, from one day to the next, changes of the most radical sort were abruptly imposed; where new masters, now coming to power, are still too concerned to prove that they alone know what is right, to be able to admit that other points of view are not completely mistaken.

But this is not the world's first great upheaval—if only it could be its last!—so there is reason to believe that, as has often come to pass, time will manage now as well to ease tensions and to level opinions, in order that people, fed up with ready-made truths proclaimed by infallible leaders, and tired of discouraging struggles for a better life, will respond with life's eternal rule: *to enjoy real peace and rights, one must first respect the peace and rights of others*. One can then take up again the discussion of great unresolved problems in an atmosphere free of political interests or ideological sectarianism; one can also concede, without harm to one's pride, that Truth and Justice are not the monopoly of one nation, nor especially of one class.

Besides, the propensity for the need to prove at any price the justice of one's own cause—which necessarily implies the groundlessness of any opposing opinion—carries with it the mark of a narrow political mind,

and this is diametrically opposed to historical objectivity. Here lies the difference between politics and history. In politics, we aim for specific, practical goals that we believe will be to our advantage; arguments in favour of our cause are only means for more easily achieving our ends, or, once we have achieved them, of better consolidating our position. The opposing cause must inevitably be a hostile cause and its defenders enemies, which logically leads to the division of the world into *angels* and *demons*.

This is the principal affliction, which we suffer, because, with such an attitude, we can resolve nothing. Certainly no one is a complete angel, and it follows that no one is a complete demon either. We are all men, formed by the same Creator, provided with the same ability to do good and susceptible at the same time to do wrong. Different circumstances, at different epochs, are such that evil comes over people who, at other times, would demonstrate a more balanced, humane spirit. Evil, like good, often finds its origins outside of man, and, without suggesting the signs of human conscience are the results of the laws of physics, we can still assert without fear of error, that certain causes carry within them the seeds of evil. If, by consequence, we wish to correctly assess historical events, we must give more attention to the *causes* that determine these events and actions than to the *men* who carried them out; indeed, events certainly constrain men much more than these men influence events.

It becomes evident that even the leaders of the greatest world powers are rarely free to act on their conscience or desires, their hands tied by pressing necessities of a constellation of external and internal forces. There certainly remains a leeway for personal initiative (which is sometimes important) but, all told, these personal efforts are themselves but one of these forces—and by far not the most powerful—that determine historical events.

This law is doubly true for the small countries tossed upon the waves of great world politics. These countries, to ensure their existence, cannot afford to neglect these strong currents that encircle them, and all the more so as these same forces exert, almost without exception, a decisive influence on the divvying up of their internal forces. Thus, the route which their efforts take is all but plotted in advance, and their leaders, manoeuvring in the small space open to independent action, must make themselves felt the best they can, in the face of oft-changing situations. If they manage to, it is not always on their merits; if they are overwhelmed, it will not always be their fault; for success or failure depend in the end on a result in

which neither their contribution nor their eventual opposition can play a predominant role.

In the introduction to this work I spoke of the small countries of central and eastern Europe, and I expressed the opinion that *the situation they face today is the direct consequence of the Russian victory*: it would be equally correct for me to say the situation of the small countries of the western hemisphere is a result of the Anglo-American victory. If, however, these situations exhibit an undeniable difference, the reason is that the Russian victory and the Anglo-American victory are not the same thing. Because, when the East and the West formed an alliance during the war in the common struggle in Europe, only their adversaries were the same—not their war aims. The western Allies, primarily England, fought to crush Hitlerian Germany and fascist Italy; on the other hand, Soviet Russia, playing a more subtle political role, fought with a view towards a more general goal, conforming to their multiple, variegated aspirations. Hitlerian Germany was *one* of the obstacles they must eliminate to achieve their goals, but it was not the only, perhaps not even the principal one. The war itself was only *one* of the means to obtain the desired result; there also exist others that can be employed with no less success after the killing is over. Indeed, it turns out that it is easier to end a war than to make peace; for war ends from the moment the enemy is stopped from fighting, whereas to create peace, the victors must unite in a common desire to consolidate. Alas, for this *union* we find ourselves with a mere edifice of an organisation under the name of the *United Nations*,¹ while we still await a true union of efforts.

Under these circumstances, the small countries—whether they qualify as satellites or allies, situated in the space where the interests of the Great Powers intersect—are far from reaching the end of their Calvary. Despite unspeakable suffering and cruel disappointment common to all, other trials await and—let us say it now—other disillusionments as well, unless they learn at their own expense that it is useless to go fishing in waters stirred up by the Great Powers. Indeed, experience is sufficient to show that it is useless for one to turn against the other in the hope of furthering one's cause with the help of the Great Powers, as this aid, if it is given, rarely benefits the one who receives it. The era of peace and tranquillity for the small countries can only be achieved when the much needed union between the Great Powers—however it is achieved—will have purified the atmosphere one breathes.

To hasten the coming of this era, the small nations can do nothing to help, because the constraints upon most of them are so strong that, apart from their paralyzed movements, even their voices are stifled. What issues from these countries, and particularly through official channels, is therefore dubious.

However, one way out will always remain open to the sons of all nations, large or small, strong or weak, and this is to speak out wherever voices are free, to speak the language common to all humanity. It is never in vain to repeat that all men being equal before their Creator, must also be equal before one another, and each must have the same right to what little happiness this earth affords.

The Powers of the world may act as they please, but cannot touch the fundamental rights of man, for these rights are prior and superior; they do not belong to these powers. Thus, even if the life of a state is not always joyful, at least let that of individuals be sheltered from violence. As we can permit ourselves to suppose that the Powers in question—certainly not all!—will make little use of these admonitions, these words that defend natural rights against all unwarranted encroachment, they are addressed from the outset over the heads of States and Governments, to all free people of the world, to those who have not yet lost the sense of respect owed the human species.

As much as my trust in the wisdom of governments is limited, my faith in the final victory of the spiritual over the material, of Liberty over slavery, of Love over hate, is absolute.

Kandilli, on the Bosphorus, June 1946



APPENDIX

SOME OPINIONS ON THE DEEDS AND ACTIONS OF THE HUNGARIANS

DOCUMENT 1

**British Minister [later Sir] Owen St. Clair O'Malley
to Press Chief Antal Ullein-Reviczky**

(Source: Neuchâtel edition of Antal Ullein-Reviczky's book
Guerre allemande, paix russe, original in the Antal Ullein-Reviczky
Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in English)

British Legation
I., Verbőczy utca 1.

Budapest, August 31, 1939

Mr. Ullein-Reviczky,
Press Department, Royal Hungarian Ministry
for Foreign Affairs

Dear Mr. Reviczky,

Since we last had a talk about the Budapest press I have carefully followed both the news and the comment in the *Pester Lloyd* on the development of the present crisis, and I just wanted to let you know personally that it has given me great satisfaction to notice two things. Firstly, that a great deal of the news published in the paper has come from London and that it seems to me to have presented a very fair and impartial picture of what is going on as far as this is known to journalists; and secondly, that editorial comment

on the crisis seems to me also to have done as much justice to the British point of view as anyone could reasonably expect. For this I feel that we have the influence of your department to thank.

I shall complain fast enough if I think you are treating us unfairly and so it seems to me only right and proper that I should send you my thanks when the opposite is the case.

Yours very sincerely,

O'Malley

DOCUMENT 2

Unsigned letter to Press Chief Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

Dear Mr. Press Chief,

The Hungarian press, under your conscious, *unpatriotic* and explicitly “pro-English” leadership, has slowly but all the more surely switched over to the Anglo-Saxon side (see e.g. *Magyarország*).

Lately, they have even published Eisenhower’s reports, to their shame [...].

It is time you came to your senses because if you do not, we shall induce you to change your mind with force. The Hungarian press can only side with the Germans. Emotional considerations, e.g. that your wife is English cannot [...].

On the envelope: Attn. His Excellency
Mr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky
Press Chief
Budapest
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

DOCUMENT 3

German opinion on Hungarian politics

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.)

(Original in Hungarian)

Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Pro Memoria

Press Section

Signor Roberto Suster, director of the *Stefani* Agency, who has just spent a few days in Budapest, issued before his departure the following communication to an official of the Press Section:

“This morning the German journalist Kornhuber (confidant of Berlin’s highest authorities) asked me for a brief interview. The conversation took place in the lobby of the Hotel *Ritz*. Along with Kornhuber, present on the German side were the journalists Weiss and Henningsen, from Berlin (both confidants of the chief of press, Otto Dietrich). Kornhuber warned me against Hungarian propaganda which, he said, distorts facts. The truth is that Hungary’s participation in this war is merely *pro forma*, as soon as it comes to making sacrifices it will step aside. On the front, there are hardly any Hungarian soldiers to be seen, and the few who are visible belong to minorities that the Hungarians would like to get rid of by sending them to the front. Hungarian politics during this war has been nothing but a prolonged series of manoeuvres and acts of sabotage. In talking about sacrifices, the Hungarians have but one thing in mind: how to cajole the Reich and allay its suspicions. The Germans are well aware that even rationing introduced by the Hungarians only serves to make believe that the country is short of foodstuffs, to give less to Germany. During Kornhuber’s narrative, the other two Germans kept nodding in agreement.”

Signor Suster said he made no comment.

Budapest, October 12, 1942.

Ullein-Reviczky

DOCUMENT 4

The perception of a Hungarian Lord Lieutenant of the Hungarian press during the war

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény.)

Copy, in Hungarian

Lord Lieutenant of the Town of Hódmezővásárhely

Vested with Municipal Authority

His Excellency

vitéz Béla Lukács

Royal Hungarian Minister, National President of the Hungarian Life Party

Budapest

At its meeting held on January 23, 1943, the steering committee of the Hódmezővásárhely organisation of the Hungarian Life Party discussed, in the context of a number of statements, various phenomena that exert treacherous effort in seeking to disintegrate the nation's inner unity. It was established in the course of the contributions that this demoralizing propaganda, determined to shake the nation's moral line of combat by all possible means, as its stated and conscious object, which feeds off—beyond the radio news services of the enemy States—the wilful conduct, condemned by all well-meaning Hungarian people, *represented by the increasingly conspicuous stance taken by some press outlets that firmly oppose national aspirations at every possible opportunity.*

The Hódmezővásárhely organisation of the Hungarian Life Party, standing guard with unshaken faith in fulfilment of its duties voluntarily undertaken in service of the fate and future of the Hungarian nation that can only lie, as a particularly heavy burden during times of hardship, on the shoulders of those who stand at the forefront of this struggle, observes with concern the blatant *manifestations of this destructive spirit on the pages of liberal press outlets and newspapers conceived wholly in the Jewish spirit.*

Their wilful conduct is capable of debilitating the nation's moral stamina and immunity when they openly, but more frequently *implicitly*, oppose the superhuman struggle that the nation, together with our great

allies, is pursuing against the ill intention of Bolshevism, to destroy all human culture.

We see on the pages of these newspapers the *conscious grouping* of sensationalist titles printed on the front pages in eye-catching, bold letters and of the events of the war in the ensuing texts, as well as the *overall design* emphasizing their significance with *technical means and intentional highlighting*, since these are manifestations that avoid the watchful eye of censorship, because the censors only see these items in separate columns, as fragmented parts, and can never see them *as a whole, the way they are presented to the reader*; these fragmented parts combined into an emphatic whole with a clearly destructive intent offer a faithful mirror image of the *concealed intentions of the initiated and well-informed*; and an even greater problem is that *they induce a sense of panic in the uninitiated, average newspaper reader, and the ambiguous commentaries with double meanings and contradictory news of a political nature with lines conveying their sense of over-inflated self-esteem* are seemingly capable of *shaking the faith in our national fight*.

The presentation in such an ill light of the military operations of the axis and our own troops, combined with the over-exaggerated emphasis on the strength and acts of our enemies, or the *presentation* of our economic situation *from such angles* are means and opportunities in the hands of this press which the regulations currently in force are unable to curb to a degree that would keep their ill intentions and aspirations within tolerable limits at such hard times as these.

When it condemns the harmful and dangerous conduct of these press outlets, the steering committee of the party feels it is its duty to inform Your Excellency of its concerns over these phenomena, and requests Your Excellency at the same time to make this issue the subject-matter of close deliberation and to take the necessary measures against such harmful and ill-disposed press-technical manoeuvres in the quarters responsible.

Your Excellency, please accept our most sincere regards and an expression of our most profound esteem.

Hódmezővásárhely, on the 30th day of the month of January in the year 1943.

Dr. Imre Fejes
Executive Secretary

Dr. Elemér Simkó
Lord Lieutenant, President

DOCUMENT 5

Memorandum written by Ullein-Reviczky, which he presented to the Allied Chiefs of Staff on February 22, 1944

(Source: Original memorandum, typed in English by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, in the Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

I have been authorized to give you the following statement:

In the event that Anglo-American forces reach our border, the Hungarian Government, which, in accordance with prevailing Hungarian opinion, in no way regards itself an enemy of England or the United States, would consider that good order and peace in the Danube Basin and the requisites of civilized existence would be guaranteed by the presence of such forces. This would allow the Hungarian Government to abide by the unofficial Hungarian statement, made early last year in the presence of a British official in Istanbul, to the effect that *Hungary would offer no resistance to the Anglo-Saxon armed forces*, providing—naturally—that such forces consist of regular troops and not partisans, Chetniks, or similar groups of Yugoslavs or Romanians.

Moreover, the Hungarian Government *endorses unreservedly the clauses of the Atlantic Charter* and is wholly ready to offer its collaboration in the re-establishment of peace and the stabilisation of South-Eastern Europe.

The Hungarian Government has full confidence in the wisdom and high principles of the governments of Great Britain and the United States, and would be happy to enjoy their confidence in turn.

Therefore, the Hungarian Government is not prepared to offer the Allied governments any undertaking that it is not within its means to implement, nor to make proposals contrary to their own interests or harmful to the task of re-establishing peace in this region of Europe.

To put it more clearly: if we say that we do not wish to fight the Anglo-Saxons, it is because the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian people share this sentiment. The Government thus has every reason to believe that when the moment comes for such a choice, it will enjoy the backing of

the entire nation. However, if the Hungarian Government promised you today that it would adopt the same response to eventual Russian military operations on Hungarian territory, that would obviously be a deception, for it is already certain that *the Hungarian nation would not follow our lead*. It must not be thought that Hungarians harbour some animosity toward the Russian people; that is not the case. Even when Hungary was obliged to participate in the war against Soviet Russia, the Government readily declared that *we claim nothing from the Russians, neither territory nor anything else*. And Hungary did all it could to reduce to a minimum its participation in a war that was not of its making. Even now, we are multiplying our diplomatic approaches to the Germans to obtain the return of the few light infantry divisions that are still behind the front lines in the Ukraine. Regrettably, the Germans have so far responded in the negative, but we will persevere. Hungary has thus withdrawn from the war in Russia *to the extent that is within its power*, and its sole concern today is to defend its national territory against an eventual aggression. But must Russia attack us? Certainly not. Russian interests do not require this, since Hungarian troops are no longer engaged against Russian forces (as noted above, our remaining troops behind front lines can't wait to be repatriated), and since Hungary poses no threat (it would be ridiculous to pretend otherwise) to Russia. On the other hand, Russia and, above all, the Bolsheviks do represent a threat to Hungary, where there remain vivid memories of the bloodthirsty regime of Béla Kun. Thus, if the Red Army marched into Hungary, the entire nation would rise against this immediate threat and fight to the last man to protect its peaceable home. The Anglo-Saxons should be understanding if we assert that our Government doesn't have the slightest chance of persuading our people that insofar as the Bolsheviks have hostile intentions regarding our country, they would modify these intentions in our favour because of their alliance with England and the United States. In these circumstances we see only two possible guarantees for the survival of the Hungarian nation: first, the presence near us of Anglo-American forces, and second, a defence of the motherland by our armed forces, modest in number but infused with the instinct for self-preservation of the Hungarian people. The Hungarian Government is convinced that to capitulate now, in the absence of proximate Anglo-American forces and in the face of an approaching Red Army, would amount to renunciation of that most natural instinct, that of self-preservation. What is more, if

the population suspected that the Government was preparing to capitulate in face of the Red Army, the Government would be swept away within twenty-four hours, giving way in all probability to a regime determined to fight to the bitter end against all of the Allies. The Germans would be delighted. It is also conceivable that with the collapse of public order, no one could hang on to power for long. And we have reason to believe that it would scarcely serve the interests of the governments of Great Britain and the United States if this European region were to be left in a state of social collapse and anarchy. These considerations evidently do not prevent the Hungarian Government from observing with keen attention the on-going efforts to find a Finno-Russian peace settlement. The assumptions of the Hungarian Government and Hungarians in general regarding Russian vengefulness towards certain nations could be favourably influenced by evidence in the on-going negotiations that the Russian demands do not compromise the honour and vital interests of their adversary.

It should be easy to make peace with Hungary, for *we make no demands on anyone and ask merely that our most sacred rights be respected*, rights that the Anglo-Saxon allies have often proclaimed. In the meantime or, more precisely, until the arrival of Anglo-American forces, *we only wish to be left in peace!* It is easy to demonstrate that this is what corresponds most closely to the authentic interests of the Allied Powers. For if the Allies rejected this hypothesis, that their best tack is to leave us alone, what would be their alternatives? They could bomb Budapest and other Hungarian cities that are bereft of any defence against their mighty air power. They could reduce to ashes thousands of homes and kill a great number of people almost all of whom, it may be noted, wish for an Allied victory over Germany, source of our misfortune. The immediate consequence of such bombing, to stay with this example, would be a loss in popular support for a government considered to be pro-Allies, followed by the collapse of the Government and the seizure of power by anti-Allies factions. Since these factions are all in the pay of the Germans, Hungarians would wake up to find that the Germans had seized everything of value—army, agriculture, mines, oil wells—in Hungary. And the Allies, similarly caught unawares, would then face a Hungary that no longer awaits them as friends and liberators, but has become wholly subservient to the German war machine. This would be a bad choice of policy.

It must be remembered that at the moment, Hungary serves the Allied cause in many indirect ways. To cite a few practical examples: 1) A large

part of our grain production and animal stock is concealed and does not figure in official statistics, thus escaping German demands. 2) Our oil production is also concealed as far as possible. We have considerable oil resources that are not exploited so as to keep them out of German hands. 3) We try to deny the Germans as far as possible the use of our territory for the marshalling of troops and war material, for the building of fortifications and command posts, and in general to establish staging posts. 4) We prevent the Germans from recruiting Hungarian manpower to staff their war industries. Among the countries linked to Germany, Hungary has the fewest workers in the Reich. 5) We prevent the Germans from enriching themselves at the expense of our Jewish population. 6) We give shelter to Polish soldiers whose numbers amount to at least two divisions, and who are at the disposal of the Allies. 7) Our railroads sabotage German troop transport as far as possible. (The proportion of such transports passing through Budapest has been reduced to some 6%.) 8) Similarly, the productivity of our war industries is kept at a very low level in relative terms. 9) The Reich's share in our exports is no greater, on average, than that of neutral countries. 10) Last but not least, we are preserving our capability in order to ensure that with the approach of Anglo-American armies, Hungary will be lost to Germany.

This collective work of sabotage, put in effect by the whole country, weighs far heavier in the balance than some individual acts of sabotage in certain other countries. However, all this is only possible thanks to the present anti-Nazi Government and only as long as the Allies let this Government do its duty by the nation and the democracies. If the Allies forced the pace in Hungary, which in present circumstances would bring pro-German factions to power and, what is even worse, the Germans into Hungary, all the advantages listed above would disappear overnight, as would the advantage accruing to the Allies from a preservation of order. Such an eventuality would carry no benefits whatsoever for Great Britain and the United States.

DOCUMENTS 6-7

Polish Views on the Conduct of the Hungarians: Two Polish Witness Statements

(Source: Neuchâtel edition of Antal Ullein-Reviczky's book

Guerre allemande paix russe)

(Original in Hungarian)

DOCUMENT 6

Więści Polski

Budapest, VII. Erzsébet körút 9-11. III. 4.

Telephone: 221-803

Budapest, September 13, 1943

His Excellency

Mr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky

Royal Hungarian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary

Budapest

Your Excellency,

We acknowledge with great regret that, upon the conclusion of your outstanding activity in Budapest, you are leaving your position where you did so much good for the Polish people, and in particular, for the newspaper published under my editorship. Please allow me, Mr. Minister, to express my most sincere and profound gratitude on behalf of both myself and my colleagues.

We shall never forget that, during the most critical times, when people could so readily have lost faith in the victory of the noble notions of democracy and tolerance, Your Excellency remained unshakably faithful to these great principles, in spite of the heavy burdens of your office. The very

existence of our newspaper, which has, thanks to Your Excellency, recently increased to eight pages, is perhaps the most compelling proof.

I should also like to most sincerely thank Your Excellency for having appointed Mr. Counsellor Étienne Mészáros as censor of our journal. It is thanks to the outstanding personal qualities of our censor, his fluent knowledge of our language, of the Polish spirit and of all the problems facing our nation, that we owe this deep bond of friendship based on complete mutual trust, which has created an atmosphere of harmonious collaboration for the benefit of our journal.

In expressing the warmest gratitude of the entire staff of *Więści Polskie* once again, please accept our best wishes, Mr. Minister, for the successful accomplishment of the new, high mission you have undertaken

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Zbigniew Kościuszko
Editor-in-Chief

DOCUMENT 7

(Original in Hungarian)

Polish Embassy

Bern

POLISH NEWS

Issue No. 5

Bern, November 1, 1943

Polish Refugees in Hungary

As of the beginning of the war, or more precisely, as of September 18, 1939, Polish refugees arrived in Hungary in masses. Their numbers increased incessantly; some of them left for other countries after a temporary stay there, while others remained. Their number must be in excess of ten thousand at present. After the arrival of the refugees, the Hungarian authorities, imbued with a spirit of traditional friendship, immediately

took the necessary measures to make their stay in Hungary as pleasant as possible. They installed reception posts at railway stations near the border; peasants awaited the refugees by the main road and offered them milk, bread, fruit and other foods. Civil refugees were put up in large cities, spas and special institutions, while soldiers were stationed in military camps. The Hungarian authorities also did a great deal to expedite the entry into Hungary of the refugees' family members left behind in Poland. Thanks to their effective intervention, the members of many a family were reunited. Polish Jews, who crossed the Hungarian border in masses fleeing persecution in Poland, were put up in special camps. In consequence, thousands of Polish Jews escaped death and enjoyed the same treatment as the rest of the Polish refugees. A Polish leader elected by the refugees was put in charge of each camp. They set up surgeries and game clubs in every location. They organised the aid campaign necessary for taking care of the refugees in such a way that each Pole, regardless of his or her age, receives the same amount of aid; however, those who held high offices before the war or formed part of the elite of Polish society—senior officials, members of the intelligentsia, journalists, poets, etc.—are eligible for aid of a higher amount. The sick are being nursed in hospitals at the expense of the State, and the State also covers the expenses of their supply of medicines. The Hungarian Government designated spas in the three largest holiday destinations, Keszthely, Mátrafüred and Mátraszőlős, for those who need climatic treatment. Civil and military refugees intending to work may receive employment based on voluntary application, their earnings are equal to those of Hungarian workers, and they are also entitled to equal social security.

In addition to the institutions established before the war, the foundation of a number of new Polish institutions testifies to the freedom that the Poles enjoy there. A separate Polish medical service was attached to the Hungarian Red Cross, and they likewise set up an office for the mental care of Polish civilians and soldiers.

Significant results have been achieved in public education as well. The most important achievement being that they established a secondary school in 1940 in Balatonboglár. The teaching staff are comprised entirely of Polish teachers. There is also a boarding school with fifty residents at present, while the number of students attending the school is some one hundred and forty. The year-end examinations amply demonstrated that the school

is functioning most excellently. Hungarian universities officially recognise the final certificates issued in the institution and admit Polish candidates the same way as Hungarians. Polish candidates study tuition-free, and enjoy other benefits as well. In the 1941–42 academic year, Hungarian universities and colleges kept records of one hundred and twenty-nine Polish students. In the 1942–43 academic year, one hundred and ninety Polish students enrolled.

Hungarians were even thoughtful enough to provide for sports. At present, there are seven Polish scout troops in Hungary, which cooperate on amicable terms with the Hungarian association. These teams organise holiday camps for students, in particular, in the summer.

The Polish press is represented by a number of newspapers and periodicals; the most important ones are the political newspaper *Więści Polskie*, which is published every other day, and the sixteen-page weekly *Tygodnik Polski*.

Other publications—volumes of poetry, short story collections and academic publications—have also been released in large numbers. A Polish library was established in 1940.

Cultural life is thriving as well. The refugees held concerts, lectures and theatrical performances in Budapest and in the larger provincial cities several times. The puppet theatre organised by the Poles is highly popular among Hungarian audiences. In June 1943, a Polish exhibition was held in Budapest, which provided an insight into the enthusiastic activities of both the Polish refugees, and the Hungarian authorities so kindly disposed towards them.

DOCUMENTS 8/A–M

(Originals in Hungarian)

**Stockholm Minister
Antal Ullein-Reviczky reports
to Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy**

(Source of selected documents: Hungarian National Archives
K 63-1943/1944-31)

8/A

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
112/pol.1943

October 6, 1943

Re.: My first visit to
Foreign Minister
Günther

My first visit to Foreign Minister Günther was spent in a half-an-hour-long conversation. The Foreign Minister welcomed me most amicably. After several, politically indifferent topics, he embarked upon Hungary's foreign policy which he described as "intelligent" (*Vous faites une politique étrangère intelligente*)—he enquired about the position we take vis-à-vis the Mussolini Government (at this point in time, I was not yet aware of Your Excellency's relevant letter and the circumstances in which it was conceived). I outlined the situation to Mr. Günther and indicated that it was, as a matter of course, out of the question that we should have anything to do with the dethroning of the House of Savoy.

In the course of the latter part of our conversation, he voiced his concern over the events taking place on the Russian front. (He believes that the rise in Russia's power is a threat to Europe. I was able to decipher from his words that he does not have much faith in the Allies' virtue against Russia.) In his opinion, the war is not likely to come to a conclusion within less than a year.

Ullein-Reviczky

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
113/pol.1943

October 8, 1943

Re.: My audience with the
King of Sweden

I hereby respectfully report that His Majesty King Gustaf V honoured me with a private conversation of some half an hour in duration on the occasion of the delivery of my credentials. In the course of this conversation, I had the opportunity to convey His Highness, the Regent's regards to His Majesty, which I was engaged to deliver on the occasion of my farewell interview with His Highness. His Majesty acknowledged the communication with gratitude and requested me to convey, likewise, his regards to His Highness. I take the liberty of respectfully requesting Your Excellency to allow me to deliver the greetings of King Gustaf V to our Regent.

Further in the course of my audience, the King asked me several questions on the situation in Hungary; however, he did not touch upon foreign policy issues. He gave me to understand that he bears a favourable disposition towards our country. Hungarian tennis was also discussed, and His Majesty spoke about the skills and abilities of the Hungarian tennis champion Asbóth in terms of high praise. He wished me a pleasant stay in Sweden, and authorised me at the same time to turn to him, "should I feel the need to do so".

After this, the members of the Legation were introduced in the customary fashion, and the audience came to an end.

Please allow me to mention a related matter; my arrival at the Swedish royal palace was filmed by a Swedish filming agency and was featured in the weekly news programme: A distinction was thereby drawn between myself and the Romanian Minister who handed over his credentials immediately before me.

Ullein-Reviczky

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
132/pol.1943

November 9, 1943

*Re.: Results of the
Moscow Conference
Highly confidential!*

I hereby respectfully report that, based on the communication received from the competent agency on the other side, the main results of the Moscow Conference were as follows.

I. On the military front

- a) The Russian wishes were granted with respect to a large-scale Anglo-Saxon offensive against Germany. It may be presumed that our informant himself is not precisely aware of the place and date of this great offensive; however, the circumstance that there is increasingly intensive interest on the other side in the details of the Germans' deployment in the Balkans may provide some guidance. *There will, however, be a western front under any circumstances, regardless of what happens in the Balkans.* (On this issue, my Japanese colleague has the following information: the great Anglo-Saxon offensive will start in the west in the spring of 1944, while there will be no major military operations in the Balkans. The Swedish Deputy Foreign Minister calls the correctness of the latter part of the information into question.)
- b) Russia receives help from the Americans on an ongoing basis in the form of military supplies and food.
- c) In response to American wishes, the Russians agreed to demonstrate exercises that make the Japanese "uneasy", so as to prevent Japan from using its sizeable military strength currently in North-China elsewhere (which my colleague from Japan estimated to be in the magnitude of one million). In order to attach additional emphasis to this agreement on the part of the Russians, they invited China's representative to Moscow during the course of the conference.

- d) The Russians agreed not to pursue military operations without prior agreement with the Allies in any further territories after the expulsion of the Germans and the recapture or capture of territories, in respect of which the exclusive interest of the Soviet was recognised.

2. Border issues and agreements of political nature

- a) The Soviet may do what they like with the Baltic States, except for
- b) a part of Lithuania yet to be precisely identified which is to be given to Poland in return for
- c) handing over its Ukrainian territories to Russia without a referendum, or any compensation from the Soviet.
- d) Poland will be awarded further compensation in Silesia and Eastern-Prussia to an extent to be determined at a later date.
- e) No agreement was reached on the Finnish issue; however, the existing differences did not intensify. The parties recognised the right of the Soviet to secure Leningrad with Eastern-Karelian territories (it may be presumed, more or less to the same extent as in the previous Finnish-Russian peace treaty); however, as regards Hangö, the Russians did not appear to be intransigent. (The Finnish Minister had lunch with me the other day and seemed satisfied.)
- f) As regards the Balkans, they were unable to come to an agreement, but the Russians agreed to an inter-allied committee to be set up in London to discuss the question of the Balkan States.
- g) The Anglo-Saxons take this London committee as an achievement on their part because they hope to occupy a dominant position there: this committee will be divided into sub-committees based on territorial units.
- h) The Allies granted the Russian wish that no group of states will come into being in Europe that may be perceived by the Soviet as anti-Russian.
- i) In return, the Soviet agreed not to disturb the independence of the States, which both the Soviet and Anglo-Saxons recognised. In this context, the statements made in the Moscow communiqué with respect to Austria serves as an example. However,

- j) in return, the Allies recognise the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty and likewise acknowledge that other States in this region may also join the treaty or may come to similar agreements with the Soviet.
- k) The above two items also apply to Hungary. (The question of Hungarian borders was not on the agenda. At all events, under the present circumstances, it appears to be guaranteed that Hungary will not be regarded as a country forming part of the Balkans and that Hungary will not be among the States to be occupied by the Soviet even on a temporary basis.)

Ullein-Reviczky

8/D

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
133/pol.1943

November 9, 1943

Re.: Reception at the Russian Embassy
to commemorate the Soviet revolution

Ambassador Kollontay held a reception on Saturday, November 6, on the occasion of the Soviet commemorative holiday on the following day. The number of those who rushed to pay their tributes to Her Excellence, the Ambassador may have been around 600. Mrs. Kollontay was recently released from a sanatorium after a lengthy treatment, which took its toll on her. She welcomed the attending guests in an armchair; she never once got up from her chair but, as I hear, she had something to say to every one of her guests.

The whole diplomatic corps maintaining relations with the Soviet were in attendance (the Japanese and Bulgarian Ministers were no exception), as were several members of the Swedish Government, senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, generals of the Swedish Army, all of Sweden's leading industrialists, representatives of trade, banking and the press and many others who, suspecting which way trends will turn, found it wise to lick the boots of the Soviet.

Seeing this illustrious company filing before her chair, Mrs. Kollontay may have wondered about those not very distant times when things were quite different. *Tempora mutantur*.*

Ullein-Reviczky

* Times are changing (Latin)

8/E

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
139/pol.1943

December 11, 1943

Re.: Additional information on Soviet and
Anglo-Saxon relations
Highly confidential!

The Moscow correspondent of *The Times* reports that the conduct of the Soviet with Germany's smaller allies is becoming increasingly more rigid. Indeed, there are signs appearing to confirm this. What is the reason for this? Based on information obtained from the other side, the following explanation appears to be the most plausible:

In spite of the friendliest atmosphere at the latest inter-allied meetings, the Soviet may have clearly understood that the Anglo-Saxons are not in the least willing "to throw Europe at the feet of the Soviet", as German propaganda likes to assert. England and America oppose the elimination of Finland, place emphasis on ensuring that Poland receive appropriate compensation for the probable loss of its Ukrainian territories, just about tolerate but are hardly enthusiastic about Czechoslovakia's extra-tour with the Soviet, withdraw Hungary from the Soviet sphere of interest and finally, are not giving an inch as regards their presence in the Balkans; in other words, they do not recognise even the Balkans as an exclusive hunting territory of the Soviet.

The Russians are well aware of this and seemingly find it to be in order; but meanwhile, they keep picking fights with certain protected States on different excuses. This is the cause of the burst of indignation with which *Krasnaya Zvezda* and the Soviet Radio attacked Finland on account of

the massacre of Russian women and children in Leningrad (an accusation entirely without foundation according to the Finnish press). This is the reason why they are using an increasingly crude and aggressive tone with Hungary. After the already publicised anti-Hungarian attack of *War and the Working Class*, this same newspaper now reports that, in addition to Finland and Romania, Hungary cannot escape punishment either. If a Hungarian soldier perpetrated an act of cruelty against a Russian—the newspaper says—, this should be taken as a wound inflicted on allies fighting side by side. Soviet voices are very much intensifying demands that not only Germany, but all their “vassals” too, should have to send workers to Russia to repair the damage and devastation wrought there; that is, retaliation and reparation are being shown as grounds for intervention.

At present, the Allies are keen to ensure that nothing on their part should occur that would allow the Soviet to conclude a lack of mutual trust. Members of the English and American Embassies received strict instructions with respect to this.

However, the embers under the ashes have not gone out yet.

Ullein-Reviczky

8/F

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
140/pol.1943

December 16, 1943

*Re.: Swedish opinion
on Russian politics
Strictly confidential!*

Today I spoke at length to Minister Söderblom, head of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with whom I have for some time maintained a rather close social relationship. I told him about my concerns regarding the fact that the Soviet, without explicitly stating it as such, will not readily remain behind the lines with respect to which they have agreed with the Allies, partly *expressis verbis* and partly on a *qui tacet consentire videtur** basis. Even the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty is a pact whose

true content will not be determined by its text, but by practical politics; Soviet policy regarding Yugoslavia and the Balkans in general is likewise not reassuring; it is also quite striking that the Russians have recently adopted a tougher tone of voice with Hungary as well, in spite of the fact that we make every effort not to provoke them.

Mr. Söderblom, who himself spent a long time in Russia, speaks the language well and deals with Russian affairs at the political department in person, attempted to disperse my concerns. In his opinion, Stalin is a great adherent of realpolitik who knows only too well what enormous efforts it will take to set Russia, a country that has sustained horrific wounds, on a course of recovery; for this formidable task, even if he does intend to resort to the work of his opponents, he will need Anglo-Saxon financial and economic assistance under any circumstances, which would not be compatible with the pursuance of an expansive, imperialistic policy that is blatantly injurious to Anglo-Saxon political interests. In all his relevant statements to date, Stalin has identified the territories which he demands; these are all former Russian territories. There are therefore no realistic grounds for assuming that all this would conceal anti-European tendencies. Mr. Söderblom regards the Russian movements that raised my concerns more in the vein of defensive measures. He remarked that Stalin urged the conclusion of the war within the shortest possible time at all meetings held with the Allies, which is understandable in the light of the state of Russia, which has been used to its utmost limits.

Ullein-Reviczky

* Latin, meaning “explicitly”, and “he who remains silent apparently agrees”.

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
141/pol.1943

December 18, 1943

*Re.: Summons for Swedish Ministers to London
and Berlin, and their reports
Strictly confidential!*

The Swedish Government has recently summoned several of its Ministers, including its Ministers accredited to England and the Norwegian Government in London and the Swedish Minister to Berlin, to present reports. Confidential meetings were held with the participation of these Ministers for several days at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the war in general and the political situation.

According to my information, both Swedish Ministers seated in London concordantly reported that England does not intend to launch a major offensive against Germany in the near future. One of the reasons being that they wish to wait until Germany is even more debilitated so that it may be defeated at the expense of lesser sacrifices. To this end, they will continue both the bombing of Germany, and the war of nerves both at home and in the occupied territories, as well as amongst its allies. The other reason is that England is still not 100% prepared for a decisive attack on Germany, which could lead to victory with unconditional certainty and within a relatively short time.

According to the report of the Swedish Minister to Berlin, while Germany is losing strength in consequence of the pressure induced by the constant bombing raids, it still represents a formidable power and cannot be easily conquered. At this point in time, we cannot expect a collapse from within, as most of the army is still unbeaten and its spirits are high.

Based on the above reports, according to my information obtained from confidential sources, leading Swedish government circles have come to the conclusion that we cannot reckon with the swift conclusion of the war. A final and decisive attack to be launched against Germany from every direction is not likely to occur before next summer. This, in turn, leads them to conclude that the year 1944 will also be a war year.

Ullein-Reviczky

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM

January 7, 1944

Strictly confidential!

2/pol.1944

Re.: Hungary's relationship with the Italian Royal Government;
relationship with the Italian Legation here

Ref. No.: 12.207/pol.1943

I hereby respectfully report, within the context of the above order, that I made enquiries in the course of a friendly, private conversation at the Italian Legation here in respect to the enquiries made by the Swiss Minister to Budapest of Your Excellency regarding the takeover of the protection of the interests of the Badoglio Government.

The Italian party informed me that the Badoglio Government did indeed request the Swiss Government to make unofficial enquiries of the German Government, and *governments of all countries* in alliance with or occupied by Germany regarding the stance they adopt with respect to the possible takeover of the protection of interests by Switzerland. It was in consequence of this request of the Badoglio Government that the Swiss Government proceeded with inquiries to the German, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Danish, etc. governments. The Italian Legation here is at present only aware of the response of the German Government, which was, of course, flat refusal and reference to the fact that they only know of a single official Italian Government, and that is that of Mussolini. I relayed the answer Your Excellency gave in response to the Swiss Minister's enquiry to the Italian Legation here, whose competent representative acknowledged it with satisfaction, stressing that, as anticipated at this point in time, Hungary alone is expected to manifest similarly fair conduct.

I venture to highlight in this context that I have not experienced the slightest estrangement on the part of the Italian Legation here either in relation to my person or the other members of the Embassy. On the contrary: beyond mere fairness, our relationship is characterised by a degree of friendship manifested by the Italian party vis-à-vis us. Proof of this is the letter of Italian Minister Renzetti, enclosed herewith in original, in which

he thanked me for my New Year congratulations and the letters, which Your Excellency sent me to be forwarded to him.

I also venture to mention that Najoli, the Italian chargé d'affaires here stressed several times in the presence of legation secretary Nagy that in every one of his letters di Ferrariis, Italian chargé d'affaires to Budapest, points out and makes specific mention of the utmost courtesy that the Hungarian Government manifests towards the Royal Legation of Italy in Budapest. He particularly appreciates the latest resolve of the Hungarian Government, by virtue of which it granted a general work permit to all Italians living in Hungary.

Finally, I would like to mention, as a case that is typical of the situation at present that the number of Italian diplomats here has recently increased by one additional secretary who managed to escape from Copenhagen, from the Italian there, under dramatic circumstances. By his account, all members of the Italian Legation in Copenhagen were interned and received fairly good treatment until the German authorities told them at the end of December that they would be transported to Germany, and unless they manifested loyal and disciplined conduct, they would be turned over to the Fascist government. However, at the last minute the above-mentioned legation secretary managed to escape one night, by boat, together with his American-born wife, who was at a rather advanced stage of pregnancy, and his little child of two years, and arrive amidst quite incredible adversities to Sweden in a state of complete exhaustion with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. His wife had in the interim given birth in consequence of all the excitement; luckily, however, in consequence of the excellent medical treatment received in Sweden, no complications emerged and the entire family is now in good health.

The rest of the members of the Copenhagen Italian Legation were transported to an internment camp specifically set up for Italians in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Ullein-Reviczky

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
3/pol.1944

January 7, 1944

*Re.: The Russian threat
Classified!*

This time, in Tehran, Russia's international position was the most prestigious during the course of its entire history. And it is the speed of this rise that is the most dazzling when, hardly three years ago, as the Soviet Government, using its friendship with Germany re-occupied the Baltic States the Anglo-Saxon press, and furthermore almost the entire international press, dealt with Russia and Stalin more specifically in the most contemptuous terms, in expression of the general atmosphere prevalent at the time. The atmosphere was similar during the first Soviet-Finnish war. And just now, most recently, Eden and Hull rushed to meet Molotov in Moscow, followed by Churchill and Roosevelt paying their respects to Stalin in Tehran. Not even Tsar Alexander, after having defeated Napoleon was given the satisfaction that Stalin now received; he had to go to the Congress of Vienna, from which he did not return home as victor.

Of course, the situation is different now. In 1814, Napoleon was already on the ground. Hitler is still standing; furthermore, he is at the head of an entire army that is ready to fight, and while the Anglo-Saxons promised to defeat them as a matter of certainty, at present, it is the Russians that are doing the brunt of the fighting. And what is even more troublesome is that Japan is also standing and is at full strength; the defeat of the Japanese is promised just as much of a certainty as the defeat of Hitler, but this may only take place after the European war, which will demand a great deal of sacrifice, and one of the pre-conditions of success is that Russia manifest amicable conduct when the time comes.

These are all widely known facts. If therefore, under the present circumstances, Churchill and Roosevelt even undertake a pilgrimage to Stalin, rather than Stalin seeking them out, it is no wonder that German propaganda harps on about nothing but the Anglo-Saxons delivering Europe to the Russians, and therefore calling the peoples of Europe to unite behind Hitler, who is their only protector. And it is likewise no wonder that many people even believe this. Neither the English, nor the Americans refute the

thesis of German propaganda; neither Churchill, nor Roosevelt firmly declares that they will not throw Europe, or even Central Europe to the Russians; on the contrary, visible signs of leniency on their part emerge everywhere. They accept the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty, do not dare openly stand up for Poland, tolerate or even welcome the ravages of Stalin's general, Tito in the former Yugoslavia. Additionally, reputable individuals from the Anglo-Saxon camp make statements suggesting that even the slightest problem of England and America is more of a priority than saving the European peoples from Stalin's appetite; in actual fact, the Anglo-Saxon press hardly ever voices any opinion to the effect that the Soviet expansion should be stopped. And what is even worse is the fact that, in the meantime, the Russian army is pushing forward; they have now even crossed the 1939 Polish border. It goes without saying that this is not in the least reassuring for the peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Alas, how much better the times were when the front stood at the Don, "lest we should encounter the Russians in the Carpathians", as we said at the time. Since then, the army at the Don has perished, and the Russians are approaching the Carpathians.

Notwithstanding, for the moment nothing is lost. Before coming to the point, a couple of thoughts emerge. The first one is as follows.

If it had been Churchill and Roosevelt's intention to throw Europe to the Soviet, it would have been a waste of their time to travel to Tehran; they could have achieved this from London and Washington as well. The game is therefore quite obviously about something completely different, even if we did not have more accurate information at our disposal. Additionally, given that the English have for a century pursued the policy of not giving the Russians access to the warm seas, they will now obviously not pursue a policy to the contrary. It is true though that, in opposition to this, the Russians have for a century pursued the policy of tending towards the warm seas; however, this is exactly where the contradiction lies. And in order for a contradiction to exist, there is no need to talk about it. And finally, the Germans have dragged partly well-meaning peoples and partly nations that are powerless against them into the Russian war, which Napoleon did, too. Apart from the losses, the results of the war to date are: the retreating Germans draw the Russians onto us with their excellently executed separation manoeuvres. If we therefore now stand by the German "help" received to date, it does not seem proven beyond doubt that continued, or even intensified use of this help may be the best way to save our country.

Based on all the information I have obtained up to this point in time, I now attempt to summarise the situation and our prospects therein along the following main lines of thought:

- I. In the context of the Soviet expansion, we must distinguish between two types of expansion: 1. territorial expansion, and 2. expansion for influence.
 1. Territorial expansion causes the Anglo-Saxons a problem on three counts; namely,
 - a) vis-à-vis Finland: that is, in the context of the defence of the northern positions. We may presume that it will be possible to find a solution here which will permit the satisfaction of reasonable Russian demands, but which will not prevent Finland from continuing to exist as a free and independent state.
 - b) vis-à-vis Poland: the Anglo-Saxons will not under any circumstances take the risk of entering into a conflict with the Soviet in the interest of saving the Ukrainian territories of Poland, but Poland's demands will have to be satisfied at the same time. Poland may receive reparation in Lithuania and Germany. In a later phase thereafter, Polish demands for the Ukrainian territories may re-emerge.
 - c) The Russian longing for the warm seas: this affects British interests most sensitively and we may therefore expect British diplomacy to make every effort to ward off this threat. The British interest in Hungary, too, serves this purpose. Hungary is the first line of defence for the warm seas. It is at the same time the gateway to Western Europe. From the viewpoint of Anglo-Saxon politics, our role is now completely different from the one we played at the time of the peace treaties concluded in the Parisian suburbs. At the time, there was no eastern threat; there was only a German threat. Keeping this at bay from the east required anti-German countries indebted to the entente: the Little Entente. Hungary could not possibly play a role in this; it was, in fact, a nuisance. Now, however, Hungary is the first and uppermost bastion of defence against the eastern threat; it is almost the entire Little Entente in one person.

The only trouble is that the Anglo-Saxons do not dare openly acknowledge this. This is partly alleviated by the circumstances surrounding Austria's independence: because Austria can only be independent if Hungary is as well. However, as to where the balance of the Anglo-Saxon and Soviet scales will stop, I believe that at this point in time, no one can tell. It may be presumed that if the Anglo-Saxons were unable to fully detach the Soviet from the warm seas, they would allow an exit at a location, which could, at a later stage, be more easily sealed off; perhaps via Bulgaria, towards Dedeagach. Naturally, a sudden, crushing Soviet victory before the Anglo-Saxon troops have the chance to engage in action would make this extremely difficult. There are signs that indicate that this is just what the Russians want to achieve.

2. As regards expansion for influence, we may perceive two directions; namely, one of a defensive nature and another of an offensive. Bearing merely Europe in mind at this point in time, there is no real limit to the Soviet expansion of a defensive nature; the purpose of this is to compromise the strength of the so-called capitalist-imperialist countries, to tie down all their resources, in spite of the greatest friendship, in order to prevent an anti-Soviet attack from that corner. Despite the dissolution of the Komintern, the communists of all countries are being instructed from Moscow, the same as before.

Soviet expansion of an offensive nature extends to territories through which Moscow intends to secure its power demands, in particular, territories, the "occupation" of which promotes the cause of gaining access to the warm seas. In this case, these territories are the Balkans, but so is so-called Czechoslovakia, which helps the Russians through the Carpathians. In the event of a Soviet victory, we would find ourselves between lines of fire here, even in the absence of a frontal attack. The Anglo-Saxons already took action against the policy of zones of influence in Moscow—as they claim, with success. Their positions are currently being formed—one of them being that they insisted on keeping the Balkans open to their armies as well, which Stalin had for some time vetoed.

- II. The Soviet uses its excellent international position to protest against all state formations, which are, *so to speak*, directed against them. The Anglo-Saxons cannot oppose this, and the Soviet has frustrated plans of this nature by already playing the trump card of Czechoslovakia. For the time being, at least.
- III. We may nonetheless observe that the Soviet attempts to keep up appearances towards the Anglo-Saxons, because they realise that they need them now as well as during the course of the post-war reconstruction work. The Anglo-Saxons, too, are well aware of this.
- IV. In the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon relationship, there is no question that the Soviet has the upper hand. The Anglo-Saxons will have a stronger position as soon as they, too, are present on the continent with a sizeable army, and this position will be even stronger if the Russians lose further strength. (Regrettably, at this point in time, this loss of strength is not particularly obvious.) If we manage to survive unharmed until then, the ground beneath us will be somewhat more firm than it is at present.

Ullein-Reviczky

8/J

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
4/pol.1944

January 8, 1944

*Re.: Political programme of the social-democratic party for
cooperation with the communists after the war*

Strictly confidential!

According to confidential information at my disposal, after the conclusion of the Czech-Russian treaty in Moscow, the Czech social democratic party formulated a draft plan, which would permit the cooperation of the social democrats with the communists after the war in both internal and external political affairs.

Based on the draft, the individual social-democratic parties should reach an agreement with the communist parties in which both parties would

assume the obligation to mutually respect and under any circumstances hold to certain basic principles in internal and external policy affairs.

These basic principles are:

From an external policy viewpoint: unconditional insistence, on the part of both parties, on the East and South-East European status quo to be established after the war. From an internal policy viewpoint: 1. preventing the formation of a Fascist or anti-Soviet government in any country and 2. supporting the establishment of people's front governments.

The above proposal was presented to various trade unions in England for deliberation for the time being. The Czech expect to conclude an agreement conceived in the above spirit between the Czech social democratic and communist parties immediately upon the return of Beneš from London. After this, they will call upon the Austrian and Polish social-democratic parties to come to similar agreements. The Czech hope that the social democratic and communist parties of the rest of the States will follow suit in the conclusion of such agreements.

According to my informant, despite their fear of the communists, both the Czech and Austrian social democrats here support the above draft agreement, because they believe this is the only way to accomplish that the Soviet gives up its fight against the social democrats. Further, by means of this agreement, they hope to avoid the predominance of the communists in Central and Eastern Europe.

Ullein-Reviczky

8/K

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
11/pol.1944

January 28, 1944

*Re.: Romanian attempts to transfer oil and other Romanian natural
resources into the hands of Anglo-Saxon interests
Strictly confidential!*

According to confidential information I have received, a delegate of the Romanian Government has in recent months paid yet another visit to Stockholm with the secret mission of attempting to draw Anglo-Saxon, but

primarily American ventures into undertaking interests in the exploitation of Romanian oil and other natural treasures after the war already at this point of time. According to my informant, the Romanian party would have been prepared to accept any conditions in the event of the successful outcome of this mission. Naturally, the underlying object was to ensure that the business interests so undertaken induce Anglo-Saxon politics to spare Romania and maintain its national independence.

Based on my information the mission did not prove to be successful, as the Anglo-Saxon party was not willing to tie down capital in advance, with reference to the fact that, given that Romanian oil as well as all other natural resources are at present in German hands, their future fate and state are highly uncertain. They are concerned that even if the war were to spare the Romanian oil fields, mines, industrial sites, etc., the Germans themselves would destroy them upon their withdrawal or the evacuation of the country. The widely known political consideration in regards to the extensive Russian demands and sensitivity concerning Romania likewise played a decisive part in the Anglo-Saxons not daring to enter into any binding agreement in connection with this country, with respect to its future.

In the wake of the difficulties experienced on the part of the Anglo-Saxons, the Romanians attempted to induce Swedish capital to undertake interests in Romania. Noting the Anglo-Saxon considerations, they are not likely to succeed in this field either.

Ullein-Reviczky

8/L

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
14/pol.1944

February 7, 1944

*Re.: The Swedish Deputy Foreign Minister's
opinion on the Russian threat
Strictly confidential!*

I found Mr. Boheman, the Deputy Foreign Minister in a rather lethargic state of mind today. The reason for this is the Russian threat. Even the Swedes who otherwise have an optimistic disposition are beginning to realise the

danger they are facing. In this, too, they follow the Anglo-Saxons. I asked Mr. Boheman whether he remembers when he told me after the Moscow Conference that the English and the Americans were pleasantly surprised by the Russians. In answer, his smile was almost distorted into a grin, and he just waved his hand once, saying "Alas, how far we have come since". In response, I remarked that I had also heard opinions that the Russians' serial acts of impertinence stem from the agreements reached at the Moscow and Tehran meetings; in answer, he only replied that they only laid down general guidelines on political issues there, presuming that the parties will proceed in good faith. But what will happen now, I asked, given that neither England, nor America tend to go against their recognised interests? "The diplomacy of both powers is beginning to discount this recognition," Mr. Boheman said, "but *when* this will turn into reality, no one knows; not even they themselves." "And what do you know about the invasion," I said, "because it is obvious that diplomacy has an easier job if there is an army standing by near on which it may rely?" "The invasion has been decided upon," he answered, "in the West as well as in the Balkans, but when it will take place, that primarily depends on military considerations. We hope that they will not come late," he added. He then began to talk about the extent of the Russian advance, on which they have no authentic information. They cannot obtain reliable information from Moscow since they ceased to have a Minister and military attaché there, and they are likewise unable to verify the information coming from Berlin. He therefore asked me whether it was true that 10 German divisions at Luck and 5 at Nicopol are closely surrounded; because if this is true, that may mean big trouble. The Germans cannot lose such significant forces in the already debilitated Russian front without grave consequences. I told him that I have no trustworthy news, but I do know that the German Legation here is attempting to play down the gravity of the situation. (I have since asked the deputy of the military attaché to obtain information on the actual situation.) He then continued without asking questions, stating that the Russian advance does not only alarm us, but also them, because their situation will be extremely difficult if the Russians seize the Estonian shoreline and if Finland is crushed. I then asked him whether they would not, in this eventuality, intend to occupy the Finnish Åland Islands as they did in 1917, because the Russians could keep Stockholm at bay from there. He seemed to be unprepared for this

question, it would appear, as at first he pretended not to have heard it, and then answered it in the negative.

After this, we spoke about a few *harmlos* (German: harmless) issues and parted, having mutually stated that we are living in hard times.

Ullein-Reviczky

8/M

ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION
STOCKHOLM
15/pol.1944

February 8, 1944

*Re.: Unconditional surrender or
non-unconditional surrender
Strictly confidential!*

We could almost say, paraphrasing Hamlet, “that is the question”. Or at least this is one of the important questions of the Anglo-Saxon camp. Unconditional surrender was for a long time a fundamental premise that bore no questioning. Later on, in particular, after the Italian ceasefire, views were being heard with increasing frequency that unconditional surrender makes no sense, because it was this rigid formula that delayed the Italian ceasefire as well. The delay only benefited the Germans, and the current military situation in Italy is a consequence of this. This, however, is only talk for the time being, and has not yet emerged as a principle; some argue for this position, while others against it. Eden last spoke in the House of Commons in favour of unconditional surrender, and British diplomats have since not dared voice views to the contrary. In spite of the fact that they have admitted several times in private conversations that this formula may make certain “changes of sides” difficult, if not impossible. It is obvious that a country that has an armed military force to hand does not surrender unconditionally. A self-respecting army does not accept this unless in an emergency. But it is all to no avail, the principle still stands, at least *ex officio*.

It is also disturbing that if a ceasefire were once again topical in any place, the Soviet, too, would have a say in that, and should the need arise for

the establishment and disclosure to the public of conditions, with respect to which both the Anglo-Saxons and the Soviet previously agreed, this would very much delay the event. And if a country succeeded in procuring a favourable condition, the next country, too, would attempt to obtain the same by entreaties. Finally, where there are conditions, there is also dispute, and they would also like to avoid this troublesome circumstance.

Based on this, whoever will be required to negotiate the next armistice agreement will not have an easy job.

Ullein-Reviczky

DOCUMENT 9

Former Prime Minister Count István Bethlen to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

Budapest, January 10, 1944

My Dear Friend,

I have received your best wishes sent by way of the Foreign Ministry, and wish to thank you gratefully and return them with wishes in a similar vein.

I was most disappointed upon your departure that we were unable to meet, because we would have had much to discuss. Therefore, let me ask you now, as an afterthought, to keep me informed from time to time, when you have the occasion, if something of note occurs.

Naturally, I shall likewise inform you of anything that I believe you should know about.

Let us hope, by the grace of God, that this year will come to a conclusion without a major disaster; this is what I wish us all, because we cannot make a better wish in the new year.

With kind regards and old friendship,

[signed]

[Count] István Bethlen

To His Excellency,

Dr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, etc., etc.

Stockholm

DOCUMENT 10

Prime Minister Miklós Kállay to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

PRIME MINISTER

Budapest, February 9, 1944

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I finally have an occasion to drop you a few lines and thank you, this time directly, for your best wishes and letters addressed to me, in which I even seem to hear the voice of your concerned friendship.

Regrettably, I have even less time than when we worked together. Things are getting harder; not only do we have foreign policy problems to cope with—where Jenő is an excellent colleague—but the internal issues, and above all, the problems of our army are becoming harder and graver by the day.

Likewise, internal politics are not as calm as they once were, in your time. Under the effect of actions and reactions, extreme manifestations are intensifying, and everyone is ever more sensitive and irritable. The Arrow-Cross forces, much the same as Imrédy and his people and the right wing of my party, do not understand the situation, and are eager to dive in headfirst. They are unable to think things through; they only get as far as to conclude that if the current scenario falls through, all is lost. The unfortunate policy—from our point of view, our very specific angle—that the Anglo-Saxons are pursuing and the splendid policy the Russians are manifesting confirm people of this disposition, allowing the proposition of the above-mentioned theory as the only correct theory. However, the other side, the so-called left-wingers brand all conservative regimes—driven in their judgement by external suggestions—as impossible, and they even have material motivations, and are therefore more impatient and prepotent. That is, we did not live to see, with times becoming more severe, those standing to the right and left of my politics drawing nearer but, in fact,

they are moving further apart, and it is to be feared that this first success of the war of nerves will become the norm. A decent man such as Károly Rassay has been left entirely on his own, and outside the stream of events. The Jews are even more composed, the main reason being, of course, that they fear a German occupation more than anything else.

I know that you are interested; that is why I briefly outlined the internal political situation, which is not yet so today, but will soon be as described.

I often think back to our morning meetings, because while Bede is an excellent deputy in his own department, I often miss your concentrated, overall accounts and reports, and your witty initiatives.

I believe we have today reached a decisive resolution in that we shall deploy our forces in the Carpathian Mountains and tell everyone that we wish to defend them entirely on our own strength, and to this end, we need the occupying troops to be deployed elsewhere under any circumstances.

Your last communication was highly interesting. I worded the answer myself, the refusal of the first item—you will receive it—, because you may remember we received a message from there to the effect that we should justify, to their liking, why the unconditional formula cannot be accepted.

And now, I take my leave. I wish you the best of luck with your work, but please also be very careful. Please relay my wife's regards and my respects at home.

With a friendly handshake,

[signed]
Miklós Kállay

To His Excellency,
Dr. ANTAL ULLEIN-REVICZKY
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
Stockholm

DOCUMENT 11

Kristóf Kállay, son of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

My Dear Tóni,

My father wrote to you in detail, so I shall only drop you a few lines. I read out your letter of February 4. He said that you see the situation very clearly. Unfortunately, he, too, sees it in the same light and is very pessimistic. I told [...] a lot of things; he will respond verbally.

Kindly pass on my greetings to your wife, yours,

Kristóf [Kállay]

February 14 [1944]

DOCUMENT 12

Member of Parliament Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

ENDRE BAJCSY-ZSILINSZKY

Budapest, March 4, 1944

I. Szent János tér 1/a.

Telephone: 153-486

My Dear Friend,

Allow me to thank you gratefully for your very kind, friendly consignment that is of immense value to me amidst my strenuous intellectual work and my continuously eroding strength. Here at home, we often talk about you and, needless to say, the high hopes that we attach to your mission in the service of our poor, orphaned country. We, too, here in the homeland—beyond party differences—attempt to construct in theory, and then confirm in practice, the necessary and essential Hungarian stance. You know only too well that this is not easy; but our dear God has blinked at the sins of the Hungarians more than once before. Naturally, this does not mean that we simply rest our hopes on some divine signal; we, too, wish to do all that is possible and all that we can.

Together with Bandi and some other friends we frequently get together, and “four or five Hungarians put their heads together” [...], meanwhile we often speak of you.

With grateful thanks, with the highest possible friendly esteem and love,

Yours faithfully,

[signed]

Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky

To His Excellency,

Antal Ullein-Reviczky

Envoy Extraordinary, Minister Plenipotentiary

Stokholm [sic]

DOCUMENT 13

Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

Hungarian Royal Minister of Foreign Affairs

Budapest, March 12, 1944

Dear Tóni,

The following story was leaked from a fully competent source in Budapest society. It would not be collegial on my part to conceal this from you.

At some Stockholm reception or lecture (I do not know where exactly it happened), your wife was supposed to be seated next to the wife of the presumptive Heir to the Throne.

Your wife, not being aware that the prospective Swedish heiress to the throne is Princess Sibylla Coburg, that is, a German woman, made in her presence some harsh, highly condemnatory statements about the Germans and the already lost war. The Swedish Princess did not take kindly to this, stood up and turned her back on her.*

It is most regrettable that this incident is now widely discussed in Pest society, which is starved for rumours.

Whether this actually happened, or not, it cannot hurt for you to ask your wife not to ever discuss politics with anyone.

* “Sibylla was, however, not very popular in Sweden. She and her husband were frequent guests at various German associations and clubs in Stockholm, which rendered them suspicious in the eyes of a public and press that, during the 1930s, easily associated everything German with the Nazi Party. The fact that members of her own family and relatives in Germany were active within Nazism also affected her reputation in Sweden.” Princess Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha-Biography, <http://www.facebook.com/notes/prince-carl-philip-of-sweden-fans-friends/princess-sibylla-of-saxe-coburg-and-gotha-biography/476843372330368> (last accessed: March 9, 2014).

Thank you very much for your kind attention, which you expressed in the form of your telegram sent to Galya. Unfortunately, things did not work out the way we planned; just when we arrived, the flu broke out which passed to my “locus minoris resistentiae”, my gall-bladder, and caused an inflammation of the gall-bladder which tied me to bed for 8 days. In the second half of the *séjour*, I shall attempt to make up for what I lost in the first one.

With best regards and
old friendship,

Jenő Ghyczy

DOCUMENT 14

Extracts from the telegram exchanges of the Hungarian Legation in Stockholm

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény and
the Hungarian National Archives, K 101-1944-2.t.)

Antal Ullein-Reviczky's draft worded in French.
(March 21, 1944)

Telegram. Sent March 21, 1944.

As the Minister of the sole legitimate Government of independent Hungary, this is to let you know, and please also inform His Excellency, Prime Minister Kállay, that I am not prepared under any circumstances to recognise the situation created by forceful means, and shall, in fact, fight with all my might against the intruders until the restoration of my Homeland's violated freedom is complete.

Ullein-Reviczky

DOCUMENT 15

Antal Ullein-Reviczky's letter to Swedish Foreign Minister Christian Günther

(March 23, 1944)

(Copy of original in French. Source: Hungarian National Archives,
K 101-1944-2. t.)

His Excellency
Mr. Christian Günther
Foreign Minister
Stockholm

Stockholm, March 23, 1944

Your Excellency,

Please allow me to inform you of the following.

Yesterday, on March 22, I presented myself before Secretary Boheman at the Ministry and read out to him the telegram that I sent to the Budapest Ministry of Foreign Affairs the day before. In my telegram I warned the Ministry (two days before the establishment of the new “government”) that I shall not recognise the situation created by forceful means and shall, in fact, do everything that lies within my power to fight the intruders until the freedom of my Homeland is fully restored.

Allow me to also inform Your Excellency that this telegram was preceded by another telegraphed message from the Ministry in which I was informed that “the Germans occupied Hungary by without warning”. This is a relevant fact, which I shall be bold enough to elaborate upon as follows.

Last night, as soon as I was informed of the establishment of the so-called Hungarian “government”, I forthwith issued a statement in which I stressed the illegitimate status of the new Hungarian “government”. This government is illegitimate because in a constitutional State, such as Hungary, the government is not made to resign through the intervention of a foreign power and one government is not replaced by another with the aid of foreign bayonets. This new “government” will not be any more

legitimate just because it is, for appearance's sake, appointed by His Excellency the Regent: the Head of State is not free to declare his intentions as the Germans—in order to implement their coup—removed him from the country and kept him under their “influence” for days, to eventually force him to approve a government that is comprised of their own trusted men. This act is a typical case of the use of force that deprives the outcome of all legal validity.

The new “government” hurriedly issued a statement to inform the shocked population of its establishment, and was not loath to claim that the country was occupied with the joint agreement of Hungary and Germany. This is, of course, absurd; I could cite a number of arguments but let me just mention one: the telegram of March 21, of the legitimate Ministry quoted above.

I should also add that the Hungarian legislative assembly adjourned itself *sine die* (Latin for indefinitely), which is yet further proof of the dictatorial nature of the regime.

Faced with these facts, I hereby respectfully declare to Your Excellency that I look upon myself as the representative of the legitimate government of constitutional and independent Hungary in Sweden and shall regard all actions on the part of the current Hungarian “government” as null and void.

By means of Your Excellency, I hereby request the Government of His Majesty the King of Sweden to take due account of the obviously illegitimate founding of the current Hungarian “government” and not to recognise it *de jure* but merely *de facto* for the term of its duration.

Yours respectfully, etc.

Antal Ullein-Reviczky

DOCUMENTS 16/A–C

Telegrams of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Gen. Döme Sztójay to Minister Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Stockholm

(March 24–25, 1944)

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Originals in Hungarian)

TELEGRAM A

1354 by virtue of resignation of government his highness the regent appointed me as prime minister and also as head of ministry of foreign affairs halt to be notified to government all subordinated offices to be informed sztojay

TELEGRAM B

re your telegram of twenty-first stop by virtue of his supreme resolution dated today his highness the regent relieved minister ullein reviczky of his office as head of the stockholm legation and of his duties as minister stop in consequence of this i hereby request ullein reviczky to immediately hand over leadership of legation to temporary acting head of legation accordingly taking due and proper minutes of handover of office and to abstain from all official acts stop due to breach of his official oath, i hereby dismiss ullein reviczky from his service with immediate effect stop he has no claim for pension stop to report on execution of my order by way of telegram sztojay 1364

TELEGRAM C

re my claris telegram 1364 based on article c 8 of act 13 of 1939 royal hungarian ministry stripped antal ullein reviczky of his hungarian citizenship on the twenty-fourth of march of this current year 1375 sztojay

DOCUMENT 17

In memory of Raoul Wallenberg Concerning the martyrdom of the Jews of Hungary

A previously unpublished document

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)
(Original in French)

We received yesterday this very interesting and informative letter:

Istanbul, March 4, 1946

Mr. Editor-in-Chief,

I was most interested to read in today's issue of your distinguished newspaper the article evoking Raoul Wallenberg. Since the article relates Raoul Wallenberg's activities in the context of the Swedish Government's initiative—strongly endorsed by King Gustav V—to save Hungarian Jews from extermination, I think it may be useful if I let you have the relevant note I addressed to the Swedish Government in my capacity as dissident Hungarian Minister in Stockholm. The significance of this note—never before published—seems all the greater in that it gave rise to Swedish initiatives that saved many thousands of Hungarian Jews.

Yours etc.,

Signed: Antal Ullein-Reviczky
Former Hungarian Minister to Sweden

And here is the document in question.

DOCUMENT 18

Copy

Letter by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, former Hungarian Minister to Stockholm to Swedish Foreign Minister Christian Günther

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in French)

Hungarian Legation
(Free Hungary)

Stockholm, April 8, 1944

110/biz. [confidential]

Mr. Minister,

I am taking the liberty of appealing to Your Excellency and, through you, to the entire Royal Swedish Government, in a cause that the humanitarian sentiments of my nation and the noble traditions of millennial Hungary allow me to represent, that of the Jews of Hungary. As a consequence of the German occupation of my country, some 800,000 Hungarians of Jewish religion or ascendancy have been subjected to unprecedented and inhuman persecution. I think I need not relate for Your Excellency details that have been amply reported by the press, among them the decrees, designed to regulate the so-called Jewish question, that were issued by the self-professed government in Budapest, actually an executive organ of the occupying power.

These decrees, Mr. Minister, are wholly illegal, for such a drastic intrusion into the life of citizens would have to be legislated—though even that is far-fetched—and cannot be enacted by simple “governmental” decrees that have no justification in any Hungarian laws pertaining to Jews. These are purely arbitrary acts!

However, the foregoing is largely a matter of Hungarian domestic legality. What is, in my view, of more immediate interest for those who still respect human rights and are motivated by love of their fellow man is the clear evidence that in the centre of Europe, 800,000 human beings face martyrdom.

May I, Mr. Minister, express the hope that the Swedish Government, which has given ample evidence of humanitarian sentiments, will not be indifferent to the fate of these poor people? Allow me to urge, Excellency, that the Royal Government respond to this new wave of human suffering by raising its voice in defence of the persecuted, and by taking all measures and initiatives it considers appropriate to alleviate the situation of my Jewish countrymen.

With apologies for having taken your time in this matter, Mr. Minister, I want to assure you of my highest esteem.

A. Ullein-Reviczky

(Also forwarded to Sir Victor Mallet, British Minister to Stockholm and Herschel Johnson, U.S. Minister to Stockholm, April 8, 1944; Herschel Johnson's answer was photographically reprinted in the article by Susanne Berger and Dr. Vadim Birstein for The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, March 20, 2012.)

DOCUMENT 19

Declaration by Antal Ullein-Reviczky on Regent Miklós Horthy

April 17, 1944

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in English)

On the subject of the recent Ordre [sic] of the Day of Admiral Horthy exhorting the Hungarian Army to fight the Russians, your correspondent addressed [sic] himself to Mr. Ullein-Reviczky, Minister of Free Hungary in Stockholm, to hear his opinion on the subject. Dr. Ullein-Reviczky made the following declaration: "At the moment when our country is under the terrible oppression of the German occupation, I and the other free Hungarian diplomats, consider this Order of the Day that enforces war against the Allies, whether Russians or Anglo-Saxons, to say the least as a serious attempt against the vital interests of the Hungarian Nation. We know the Regent well enough to have expected a totally different manifestation on his part. As anyhow the Regent of Hungary, since the Nazi aggression [sic], seems deprived of any liberty of action, we are not in a state to establish, whether, concerning the Order of the Day in question, the announced "order" was really forthcoming from Admiral Horthy himself or from the quislings who act in his name. The mystery that envelops the person of Admiral Horthy since the accession of the quislings to power, has not been yet cleared up. It is only too natural that the doubts concerning the participation of the Regent in the current events in Hungary, will exist as long as the quislings do not produce more convincing proofs than his name printed at the end of some document."

17. IV. 1944

DOCUMENT 20

Telegram of Gábor Apor, Hungarian Minister to the Vatican to Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Stockholm

(June 14, 1944)

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in Hungarian)

TELEGRAM

I hereby send my fraternal greetings to all my colleagues on this first occasion I have to speak openly. At the same time, I am turning to you with a proposition: it is true that a foreign army broke into the country, imposed its own people on it and terminated constitutional freedom by casting the legislative assembly aside, dissolving the constitutional parties and carrying off their leaders, abolishing the free press and imprisoning its editors; in other words, by silencing all constitutional factors. Only those who represent the country abroad lawfully and legitimately are in a position to have the real voice of the nation heard and express the protest of the nation against the oppression of its ancient freedom.

In order to do this as effectively as we can, I propose that we unite into a “committee representing Hungarian freedom”. Its object would be

1. to represent and to preach Hungarian freedom together and to make efforts to restore the same;
2. to keep an eye on every opportunity that may be suitable for restoring the peace of the country in the spirit of justice and, in particular, concord with the direct neighbours.

We shall place all of these elements at the disposal of the government, which will restore law and order and will legitimately represent the nation's free determination.

Concordantly: [Ferenc] Ambró, Madrid; [György] Bakach-Bessenyey, Bern; [György] Szabó and [Antal] Ullein-Reviczky, Stockholm; [Andor] Wodianer, Lisbon; [Dezső] Újváry, Istanbul. Please state your position and acknowledge receipt of this telegram at the address Legazione Ungheria, Città Vaticano. Secretary [Tamás] Perczel joined my appeal. Apor.

DOCUMENT 21

Antal Ullein-Reviczky to U.S. Minister Herschel Vespasian Johnson

(Source: Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives, Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

(Original in French)

Free Hungarian Legation

Stockholm, July 14, 1944

Mr. Herschel V. Johnson,
Minister of the United States of America,
Stockholm

Mr. Minister,

Today, July 14th, on the B.B.C. Hungarian Broadcast at 13 hrs it was announced that at the American Senate Mr. Barclay* held a speech, which contained a message to the Hungarian People to detach themselves from Hitler. The Senator expresses regret that all the warnings coming from the American side have had no response, and that the Hungarian “Government” continues to shed the People’s blood in the Nazi cause. The Senator adds that this attitude will cause Hungary to definitely lose any credit that she may have in the eyes of the civilized world; Hungary is also risking to lose her independence after the Allied Victory.

I should be very much obliged, Mr. Minister, if through the channel of the U.S. State Dept. you could inform Senator Barclay that since March 19th Hungary is to be considered an occupied country due to the Nazi aggression. The occupier and their vassals, the Hungarian Nazis have instituted in the country a reign of persecution, oppression, and terror of which the Hungarian People are the first victims. Although the people

* In *Guerre allemande, paix russe* Barclay is a misspelling for Alben William Barkley (1877–1956) who served as the 35th Vice President of the United States (1949–1953) under President Truman. He was Senate Majority Leader in office from 1937 to 1947.

are disarmed and are deprived of every means to defend themselves (the short time has been insufficient to organize active resistance), all the news arriving from Hungary confirms that the bulk of the Nation is opposed to the Nazis. Everything seems to indicate that the actually passive resistance will become active in time as soon as the Hungarian Patriots can be furnished with arms and munitions. In the actual situation the unfortunate Hungarians are unable to act following the various warnings received from the Allied side, notwithstanding that the greater majority of the Nation shares the point of view of the Allies.

Concerning the end of Mr. Barclay's speech, that Hungary may lose her independence after the Allied Victory, allow me, Mr. Minister, to let you know quite frankly that on the contrary the Hungarian Nation is hoping to recover her independence through the Allied Victory.

Believe me,
yours sincerely

A. Ullein-Reviczky

DOCUMENT 22

Regent Miklós Horthy's proclamation of October 15, 1944 to the Hungarian nation

(Source: Hungarian News Agency's daily report issued
on October 15, 1944)

(Original in Hungarian)

Ever since the will of the nation put me at the helm of the country, the most important aim of Hungarian foreign policy was, through peaceful revision, to repair, at least partly, the injustices of the Peace Treaty of Trianon. Our hopes invested in the League of Nations in this regard remained unfulfilled.

At the time of the beginning of a new world crisis, Hungary was not led by a desire to acquire new territories. We had no aggressive intention against the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, and Hungary did not wish to regain territories taken from her by war. We entered Bácska only after the collapse of Yugoslavia and at that time in order to defend our blood brethren. We accepted a peaceful decision of the Axis powers regarding the eastern territories taken from us in 1918 by Romania.

Hungary was forced into war against the Allies by German pressure, which weighed upon us owing to our geographical situation. But even so we were not guided by any ambition to increase our own power and had no intention to snatch as much as a square metre of territory from anybody.

Today it is obvious to any sober-minded person that the German Reich has lost the war. All governments responsible for the destiny of their countries must draw pertinent conclusions from this fact, for, as a great German statesman, Bismarck, once said: "No nation ought to sacrifice itself on the altar of an alliance." Conscious of my historic responsibility, I have the obligation to undertake every step directed to avoiding further unnecessary bloodshed. A nation that would allow the soil inherited from its forefathers to be turned into a theatre of rearguard actions in an already lost war, defending alien interests out of a serf like spirit, would lose the esteem of public opinion throughout the world.

With grief I am forced to state that the German Reich on its part broke the loyalty of an ally toward our country a long time ago. For a considerable time it has launched ever-new formations of Hungarian armed forces into

the fight outside the frontiers of the country against my wish and will. In March of this year, however, the Führer of the German Reich invited me to negotiate in Kleßheim, in consequence of my urgent demand for the repatriation of Hungary's armed forces. There he informed me that Hungary would be occupied by German forces and he ordered this to be carried out in spite of my protests, even while I was detained abroad. Simultaneously, German political police invaded the country and arrested numerous Hungarian citizens, among them several members of the legislative assembly as well as the minister of the interior of my government then in office. The Premier himself evaded detention only by taking refuge in a neutral embassy.

After having received a firm promise from the Führer of the German Reich that he would cancel acts that violated and restricted Hungary's sovereignty in the event that I appointed a government enjoying the confidence of the Germans, I appointed the Sztójay government. Yet the Germans did not keep their promise. In the shelter of German occupation, the Gestapo tackled the Jewish question in a manner incompatible with the demands of humanity, applying methods it had already employed elsewhere. When war drew near the frontiers, and even passed them, the Germans repeatedly promised assistance, yet again they failed to honour their promise. During their retreat they turned the country's sovereign territory into a theatre of looting and destruction.

Those actions, contrary to an ally's loyalty, were crowned by an act of open provocation when in the course of measures for the maintenance of order in the interior of Budapest, Corps Commander Field Marshal Lieutenant Szilárd Bakay was treacherously attacked and abducted by Gestapo agents who exploited the bad visibility of a foggy October morning when he was getting out of his car in front of his house. Subsequently, German aircraft dropped leaflets against the government in office. I received reliable information that troops of pro-German leanings intended to raise their own men to power by using force to effect a political upheaval and the overthrow of the legal Hungarian government, which I had appointed in the meantime and that they intended to turn their country's territory into a theatre of rearguard actions for the German Reich.

I decided to safeguard Hungary's honour even in relation to her former ally, although this ally, instead of supplying the promised military help, meant to rob the Hungarian nation finally of its greatest treasure: its freedom

and independence. I informed a representative of the German Reich that we were about to conclude a military armistice with our previous enemies and to cease all hostilities against them. Trusting your love of truth, I hope to secure in accord with you the continuity of our nation's life in the future and the realisation of our peaceful aims.

Commanders of the Hungarian army have received corresponding orders from me. Accordingly, the troops, loyal to their oath and following an order of the day issued simultaneously, must obey the commanders appointed by me.

I appeal to every honest Hungarian to follow me on the path beset by sacrifices that will lead to Hungary's salvation.

DOCUMENT 23

Antal Ullein-Reviczky's memorandum from Stockholm to the Temporary National Government of Hungary

(Source: Original French draft in the Antal Ullein-Reviczky Archives,
Magyarnándor-Kelecsény)

Stockholm, April 14, 1945

To the Honourable Hungarian Government
Debrecen

Almost four months have elapsed since the establishment of the Honourable Hungarian Government, and our situation here is becoming increasingly more untenable, given that we have no contact with Debrecen. I do not wish to burden the Honourable Hungarian Government with the trivial details of office work at this point, but I feel compelled to draw its attention to a few important issues, the resolution of which within the shortest possible time can, in my humble opinion, only yield benefits.

1. The staff of the Legation under my control de facto are comprised of those who, together with myself, opted to defect in March 1944, after the Nazi coup. In the meantime, the Legation sent by Sztójay to Stockholm has also come under my control, given that, after the October 1944 Szálasi coup, Mr. Parcher engaged as chargé d'affaires voluntarily handed everything over to me. He and the staff at the time resigned to pursue private affairs. The Swedish Government continues also at present to recognise the Legation as a de facto diplomatic mission, and the Swedish authorities liaise with us on all issues concerning Hungary and the Hungarians living here. We additionally also perform consular duties. The Allied embassies, too, have confidence in my colleagues and me and maintain fair relations with us, as well as with Mr. György Szabó, our minister who defected from Helsinki. Only minor groups of Hungarian emigrants—who incessantly wrangle also amongst themselves—feel it their duty to look upon us as the enemy. Their argument is that we also served during the so-called “Horthy regime”.

My attempts to make peace with them have so far been foiled as they receive their instructions for their intransigent behaviour directly from the Hungarian grand council in London. We have even failed to find a common denominator to all the democratic Hungarian factors, when a mere charitable cause—helping Hungarian children—was at stake, which made a most unfavourable impression here, in Sweden. If the Honourable Hungarian Government were to back the Legation with its authority, our situation would obviously be much more stable than it is at present. Given the current state of affairs, we would, in fact, have even considered dissolving the Legation; I, however, have to date been more disposed to avoiding this solution because, at the time of the foundation of the government, our Legation existed *de facto*, and by virtue of this circumstance, such a measure on my part could be rightfully construed as a sign of lack of trust in the new Hungarian government whose democratic programme I myself heartily embrace. I would be most grateful to learn what the position of the Honourable Hungarian Government is on the above.

2. I continue to manage our operations here from state funds. As we have not received a penny from Budapest since the German coup in March 1944, I pay our employees' and colleagues' much reduced salaries from this pool of funds, which was originally set up for this purpose. It is also from these funds that I make certain payments of public interest (Stockholm Hungarian Institute, etc.), which the legitimate Hungarian government in office before the Sztójay government undertook to honour. Even economizing as stringently as possible, this pool of funds can only last us at a maximum of one year. I sincerely hope that I shall in the meantime have the opportunity to render an account of my operations to the Honourable Government. An important detail, which needs to be addressed urgently emerges, however. It is about the not too many diplomatic officials and other employees who continued their service under Sztójay, and only opted to defect after the Szálasi coup. I have to date not paid their remuneration from the funds entrusted to me. However, as I learned from several of them, the funds placed at their disposal will be exhausted by May. Given that they are not allowed to engage in gainful employment here, I must urgently learn about the position of the Honourable Government on whether or not I

am allowed to pay them a modest sum from the Embassy's pool of state funds.

For the questions dealt with above, as well as for all other matters, the measures of the honourable government may be communicated to me in Stockholm, during my stay here which, in principle, should end at the same time as the hostilities in Europe. Already at the outset of my diplomatic mission, it was understood that this was to be of a temporary nature. It is, however, useless to emphasize that be it here or elsewhere, and in whatever position, I shall never stop working, as far as possible, for the reconstruction of our country and for the triumph of democracy.

DOCUMENT 24

Antal Ullein-Reviczky's second memorandum to the temporary Hungarian Government

(July 5, 1945)

(Original French draft. Source: Hungarian National Archives,
K 101-1944-2.t.)

To the Honourable Hungarian Government
Budapest

The time that has elapsed since my last memorandum served upon the Honourable Government (April 14, 1945) and events that have occurred in the interim have necessarily led to the dissolution of the Legation. This fact—that already prevailed *de jure* as a matter of course—also transpires from the new diplomatic register of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the “Hungary” column of this register merely records the existence of an office without a list of names. As the said register lists Germany in precisely the same manner, I felt it was my duty to notify the Ministry that I would be unable to accept Hungary and Germany being treated in the same category. The office of an otherwise non-existent Legation would not be able to perform any useful work. I therefore converted the “Legation” office into a consular bureau. The consul-general (Carl-Axel Petterson) continues to remain recognised here, and by virtue of this circumstance, the office, too, may continue to engage in its activities in the interest of the hundreds of Hungarian refugees released from Nazi concentration camps and may additionally also perform its consular duties. The title of office director is held by Mr. Imre Bartha.

As by virtue of circumstances my position has become even more uncertain, I have hardly been able to wait for the first opportunity that presented itself to finally implement my plan, of which I had already informed the Honourable Government in my previous memorandum, and bid farewell to Sweden, also to thereby leave my diplomatic career behind. As I handed over all state property to Mr. György Nagy and Mr. Imre Bartha, I shall shortly travel to Istanbul with my family on a private

mission in order to settle the estate of my late father-in-law, the former British Consul, who passed away a year ago. We shall reside in the house of my mother-in-law, Mrs. Cyril Cumberbatch, at the address of the British Consulate-General.

Stockholm, July 5, 1945

A. U.-R.



NOTES

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION

- 1 The evil and grotesque Bolshevik rule led by Béla Kun ended in August 1919, when Kun was expelled from the country and a counter-revolutionary régime was established.
- 2 The Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920) deprived Hungary of three-quarters of its territory and two thirds of its population. Romania secured for itself Transylvania, part of the Bánát, including Temesvár (Timesoara) (about 64,000 sq.km.) with over 5 million ethnically and linguistically Magyar inhabitants. Slovakia and Ruthenia (38,168 sq.km.) were ceded to Czechoslovakia. Croatia-Slavonia and the Western portion of the Bánát (39,075 sq.km.) were handed to Yugoslavia. The Burgenland (about 2,500² km.) was awarded to Austria. The Treaty was signed by the Hungarian delegation under great protest, and its leader, Count Apponyi resigned. The Treaty was ratified by the Hungarian Parliament on November 13, 1920.
- 3 Société des Nations—League of Nations.
- 4 Antal Ullein-Reviczky, *La nature juridique des clauses territoriales du Traité de Trianon* (Paris: Editions A. Pedone, Librairie de la Cour d'Appel et de l'Ordre des Avocats, 13 rue Soufflot, 1st edition 1929, 2nd edition 1936).

PART ONE

- 1 Thomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937). Czech sociologist, university professor, and President of Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1935.
- 2 Masaryk, Thomas G., *L'Europe Nouvelle* (Paris, 1918), p. 53; *Das neue Europa*, Berlin, 1922.
- 3 Robert William Seton-Watson (1879–1951). British journalist, historian, politician.
- 4 Seton-Watson, Robert William, *Treaty Revision and the Hungarian Frontiers* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1934).
- 5 Ibid., p. 61.
- 6 Ibid., p. 45.
- 7 Eduard Beneš (1884–1948). Czech politician, Foreign Minister from 1918–1935, President of Czechoslovakia from 1935–1938 and 1945–1948.
- 8 Zdenek Fierlinger (1891–1976). Czechoslovak politician, from 1945–1946 Prime Minister, 1946–1953 deputy Prime Minister.

- 9 Kálmán Kánya (1869–1945). Diplomat. From 1920 to 1925 Permanent Under-secretary to the Foreign Minister. Ambassador to Berlin, 1920–1925, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1933–1938.
- 10 Count István Csáky (1894–1941). Diplomat. In the 1920s and 1930s occupied various positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from December 1, 1938, until his death was Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- 11 Big Four. The four signatories of the Munich Accord: Adolf Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy), Edouard Daladier (France), Neville Chamberlain (Great Britain).
- 12 Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946). Foreign Minister of Germany until 1945. A fanatical Nazi he was hanged for war crimes after the Nuremberg Trials.
- 13 Benito Mussolini (1883–1945). Founder of Fascism and leader of Italy from 1922–1943. He allied Italy with Nazi Germany and Japan in World War Two. He represented Italy at the Munich four-power conference of September, 1938. On September 23, 1943, he formed a new government and proclaimed the new North Italian Fascist People's Republic in opposition to the Royal Government. Captured by Italian partisans and shot on April 28, 1945.
- 14 Count Galeazzo Ciano (1903–1944). Son-in-law of Mussolini, Italy's Foreign Minister from 1936–1943. Mussolini had him executed for "treachery".
- 15 Jozef Tiso (1887–1947). Slovak politician. Catholic priest. In 1938–1939 Prime Minister of the German puppet state, from 1939–1945 President of the independent Slovak Republic. Executed as a war criminal.
- 16 Augustin Volosin (1874–1945). Anti-Hungarian and pro-Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, politician, teacher and essayist. Monsignor Volosin was President of the autonomous Carpatho-Ukraine from October 8, 1938 to March 15, 1939.
- 17 Béla Imrédy (1891–1946). Economist, extreme right-wing politician; 1932–1935, Minister of Finance in the Gömbös government. 1935–1938 President of the National Bank of Hungary. From May 14, 1938 to February 16, 1939, Prime Minister of Hungary. Sentenced to death as a war criminal. See Péter Sipos, *Imrédy Béla és a Magyar Megújulás Pártja* [Béla Imrédy and the Hungarian Rejuvenation Party], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1970).
- 18 Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany and Japan, signed on November 25, 1936. Italy joined a year later and Hungary in 1939.
- 19 (Paul) Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945). One of the earliest members of the Nazi Party. Edited the chief Nazi newspaper, *Der Angriff* from 1927 and became Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933–1945. He remained with Hitler in Berlin to the end, just hours after Hitler's suicide, Goebbels and his wife Magda killed their six young children and then committed suicide.

- 20 Teleki was appointed Premier by Admiral Horthy in July, 1920. He retired in 1921 and did not return until February, 1939, when he was again appointed Premier by Horthy.
- 21 Gyula Gömbös (1886–1936). Military officer, right-wing politician; he held the office of Minister of Defence from 1929 as well as that of Premier from 1932–1936.
- 22 Count István Bethlen (1874–1946). Hungarian aristocrat and statesman, served as Prime Minister from 1921 to 1931. Bethlen was one of the few voices in Hungary opposed to an alliance with Nazi Germany. When Budapest fell to the Soviet troops in April 1945, Bethlen was captured and taken to Moscow, where he died in prison.
- 23 Jules Michelet (1798–1874). French historian and man of letters.
- 24 Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676–1735). Member of a noble Hungarian family that greatly influenced the history of Hungary and Transylvania in the 17th and 18th centuries; one of Hungary's great national heroes, Rákóczi led a Hungarian resistance against the Habsburgs, and in the Diet of Ónod (1707) the nobles declared the overthrow of the dynasty and the total independence of Hungary. The movement was defeated a few years later, however, and Rákóczi fled, settling eventually in Turkey, where he died. His remains were brought back to Hungary in 1906.
- 25 Joseph II (1741–1790). Emperor of Austria (1765–1790), King of Hungary and the Czech lands (1780–1790).
- 26 Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894). Entered politics in the second quarter of the 19th century as a member of the Hungarian diet and soon became the articulate spokesman of an extreme nationalism that did not shrink from the prospect of separating from Austria. Kossuth was the virtual leader of the revolutionary government after 1848. Following the fall of the Hungarian republic in 1849, he lived abroad. So dissatisfied was he with the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) of 1867 that he refused an offer of amnesty in 1890. After his death in Turin, however, Hungary reclaimed his body, and Kossuth was buried in state in Budapest.
- 27 Count István Tisza (1861–1918). Landowner, politician, Prime Minister from 1903–1905 and from 1913–1917. We now know that at the discussions and crown councils prior to the declaration of war against Serbia in 1914 it was Tisza, as Hungary's Premier, who alone opposed the Dual Monarchy's ultimatum to Serbia, and moreover had it recorded that Hungary protested against any infringement of Serbia's independence as well as against any Austro-Hungarian expansion in the Balkans. We are also now aware that the Czechs, the Serbs, the Romanians and the Poles wanted war in 1914. Hungary had no territorial or other aspirations, and felt it could only lose as a result of war. Count Tisza was assassinated in 1918 when soldiers broke into his home, the Roheim villa in Budapest (Hermina út 35).
- 28 Count Mihály Károlyi de Nagykárolyi (1875–1955). Landowner, politician, founder of the 1918 Popular Republic. President of Hungary in office November 16, 1918–March 21, 1919.

- 29 Károly Rassay (1886–1958). Lawyer, politician, leader of the Citizens' Liberty Party.
- 30 A leading Hungarian journal published in French between the two world wars that served as a vehicle for cultural achievements between Hungary and the West. It attempted to pose as both a vent for pressures from international politics, and evidence that Hungary was worthy of notice, since its wealth of cultural accomplishments reflected the best in European culture at large.
- 31 *The Hungarian Quarterly* was funded and first launched in 1936 by a group within the anglophile Establishment led by Count István Bethlen. The journal ceased publication in 1944 when, during the final stages of the war, fascists killed its editor, the remarkable József Balogh. The journal was revived in 1960 with the title *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. The journal managed to free itself of state control in 1993, returning to its original title of *The Hungarian Quarterly*.
- 32 Tibor Eckhardt (1888–1972). Lawyer, politician, leader of the Smallholders Party from 1932. The party lost much of its importance and quality when Eckhardt, with Pál Teleki's approval, went to the United States to represent Hungarian interests there. (Correspondence in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.)
- 33 Zoltán Tildy (1889–1961). Calvinist minister and vice president of the Smallholders Party. He was politically untrained. Prime Minister from 1945–46, and President of the Republic from 1946–1948. Minister in the Imre Nagy government in 1956.
- 34 Béla Varga (1903–1995). Catholic priest, politician. Vice President of the Smallholders Party from 1937 and party leader from 1946–1947. Asked by Teleki and Kállay to supervise Polish and French refugees in Hungary during World War Two (Poles numbered more than 100,000, the French several thousand). This work occupied most of Varga's time. In 1947 Varga emigrated to the United States to represent Hungarian interests there. (Correspondence with Antal Ullein-Reviczky in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.)
- 35 Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky (1886–1944). Lawyer, leading figure of Hungarian politics and an important voice in the struggle against German expansion and military policy. An ally of Prime Minister Kállay, he struggled to preserve Hungary's independence. Following the German occupation, he was arrested by the Gestapo and executed. Today many streets are named after him including one of Budapest's main boulevards. (Correspondence in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.)
- 36 Premier Count Pál Teleki (1879–1941). Committed suicide during the night of April 3–4, 1941. On December 12, 1940, Hungary concluded a Treaty of Friendship with Yugoslavia, which Germany regarded as an unfriendly gesture. The pact put the Cvetkovitch government in Yugoslavia into a difficult position, and on March 25, 1941, it was obliged to adhere to the Tripartite Pact as a counterweight. This provoked a military putsch and on March 27, 1941, the government was overthrown. Germany regarded the military coup as a hostile act and asked permission to send

its troops across Hungarian territory to attack Yugoslavia. Hungary had to choose between complying with, or resisting this German demand. Teleki sent an emissary to Mussolini to ask whether Hungary could count on his help if the country resisted. Mussolini bluntly refused. Furthermore, the British government made it known that should Hungary participate in this German aggression, it would have to count on a declaration of war from England. Faced with this tragically untenable situation, Teleki sought escape in death to make the world aware of the tragedy in which his country found itself.

- 37 Dezső Laky (1887–1962). University professor, politician, from 1939 member of Parliament; 1940–1941, Minister without portfolio.
- 38 Gestapo, short for Geheime Staatspolizei, formed in 1933, the official secret police of Nazi Germany employed over 30,000 persons in 1944.
- 39 Thanks to a powerful campaign in favour of the first territorial revision of the Treaty of Trianon, directed by a young Antal Ullein-Reviczky, himself a native son of Sopron.
- 40 Anschluss: the annexation of Austria.
- 41 The Soviet-German Pact was signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939. Poland was thereby partitioned between Russia and Germany, and after heroic resistance it ceased to exist.
- 42 Short for Sturzkampfflugzeug.
- 43 Maginot line. A line of fortification built by France on its eastern frontier.
- 44 Maxim Maximovich Litvinov (1876–1951). Commissar of Foreign Affairs from 1930–1939.
- 45 Clement R. Attlee (1883–1967). British Prime Minister (Labour Party) from 1945–1951.
- 46 Raoul Bossy (1894–1975). Romanian diplomat. From 1936–1939 Minister to Budapest, from 1941–1943 to Berlin.
- 47 Vienna, August 30, 1940. Original “Ungarische Teilnehmerliste”, Hotel Bristol, Wien, with the names of the Hungarian delegation and room assignments in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 48 Mihail Manoilescu (1891–1950). Romanian Foreign Minister.
- 49 Paul Karl Schmidt. Born in Kelbra, Saxony-Anhalt, 1911. SS officer, and from 1940–1945 chief of the German Foreign Ministry press and information section.
- 50 Aleksander Cincar-Marković (1889–1948). Yugoslav diplomat; from 1935–1939 Minister to Berlin; from 1939–1941 Foreign Minister. The original invitation card for this dinner on Thursday, December 12, 1940 and the dinner menu are in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation: Dîner du 12 décembre 1940, Crème Ambassadeur, Filet de Bar à l’Amiral, Foie Gras au Porto, Dinde truffée

aux marrons, Coeur de Salade Romaine, Asperges de Californie sauce mousseline, Parfait d'Ananas, Corbeille de fruits.

Dinner hosted by The Prince Regent and Princess Olga at Beli Dvor on Wednesday, December 11, 1940. Original invitation table plan and menu in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation: Beli Dvor Diner, le 11 décembre 1940, Caviar, Consommé Saint-Etienne, Pâté de Homard Cardinal, Riz Pilaf, Selle de veau Romanoff, Pommes de terre fondants, Laitues Braisées Richelieu, Suprême de Bécasse Favorite, Salade à l'indienne, Parfait Georgette, Friandises, Fruits.

- 51 Prince Paul, Serbo-Croatian Knez (Prince) Paul Karadorđević (1893–1976). Member of the Serb Royal family; Prince Regent of Yugoslavia from 1934–1941.
- 52 Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky noted in her diary: January 26, 1941: “Shock! Prof. Verebely ’phoned to Antal that Csáky had suddenly taken a turn for the worse—a question of hours... Antal spent his day there and I went to the Clinic in the afternoon. Terrible! January 27: At 2.28 a.m. a phone call, the end came at 2.20 a.m. Lord Bless and Rest His Soul! Antal left at once and came home at 3.30 a.m.”

PART TWO

- 1 Braunes Haus: Brown House—from 1933 the headquarters of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Munich.
- 2 Otto Dietrich (1897–1952). German newspaper reporter, Hitler’s right-hand man. Sentenced to a seven-year prison term at the Nuremberg Trials, he was set free in 1950.
- 3 Dragiš Cvetković (1893–1969). Yugoslav politician, Prime Minister from February 5, 1939 to March 27, 1941.
- 4 General (Vezérezredes) Henrik Werth (1881–1952). Of Swabian origin, he openly boasted about his ancestry, claiming that German descent was a requirement for holding high military office, as those of Magyar descent were less talented. In Soviet captivity from 1945 until his death. Sentenced to death in absentia by the Hungarian People’s Tribunal.
- 5 György Barcza (1888–1961). Diplomat. From 1924–1927, head of the political department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1927, envoy to the Vatican; from 1938–1941, Minister to London.
- 6 Anthony Eden (1897–1977). British politician. Foreign Secretary from 1935–38, 1940–45, 1950–55. Prime Minister, 1955–57.
- 7 Prime Minister Pál Teleki committed suicide during the night of April 3–4, 1941, and was found the next morning. Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky noted in her diary: “Tragic news. Our dear Prime Minister Count Paul Teleki committed suicide at midnight! Antal saw him at 9.30 p.m. at the F.O. The Germans order us to join them in occupying our territories in Yugoslavia and the British have announced officially

they will bombard us!” Teleki’s suicide note said in part: “We have become breakers of our word...I have allowed our nation’s honour to be lost. The Yugoslav nation was our friend...But now, out of cowardice, we have allied ourselves with scoundrels. I did not hold back. I am guilty.”

- 8 Károly Bartha (1884–1964). Hungarian military officer and politician, served as Minister of Defence from November 15, 1938–September 24, 1942.
- 9 By the Treaty of Trianon, Romania secured part of the Bánát, including Timesoara (Temesvár), the western part of the Bánát was ceded to Yugoslavia.
- 10 Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (originally Skryabin, 1890–1986). Soviet politician, from 1939–1946, commissar for foreign affairs, from 1946–1949 and from 1953–1956, foreign minister.
- 11 József Kristóffy (1890–1969). Diplomat, Minister in Moscow between 1939–1941; in Copenhagen from 1943–1944.
- 12 Otto von Erdmannsdorff (1888–1978). German diplomat. German Minister in Budapest under the Nazis from May 1937–1941; from 1941 he served as Undersecretary of State at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Von Erdmannsdorff was later acquitted of war crimes in the Ministries Trial.
- 13 Sándor Győrfy-Bengyel (1886–1942). Professional soldier, General (vezérezredes), from 1941 Deputy Minister of Defense, from 1941–1942 Minister without Portfolio.
- 14 Today Apáczai Csere János utca.
- 15 Horthy, Bárdossy and Chief of Staff Ferenc Szombathelyi visited the Nazi “Hauptquartier” from September 7–10, 1941.
- 16 Herbert Claiborne Pell (1884–1961). American diplomat. Pell served as Minister to Hungary from May 20, 1941–December 1941. On December 13, 1941 he received the Hungarian declaration of war against the United States. He closed the Legation in Budapest and returned to the U.S. on January 16, 1942.
- 17 Jusztiáni Serédi (1884–1945). From 1927 Cardinal of Esztergom, Prince-Primate of Hungary.
- 18 Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) (1876–1958). Pope from 1939 to 1958.
- 19 Mgr. Dr. Angelo Rotta (1872–1965). Originally from Milan, Italy, was the Apostolic Nuncio in Budapest from May 13, 1930–1944.
- 20 Lovice Louisa Grace (née Cumberbatch).
- 21 On December 7, 1941, at 7:30 a.m. local time, the Japanese attacked the US Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour. The European conflict had become a World War.
- 22 György Ghika (1882–?). Diplomat, Hungarian Minister to Washington between 1940–1941.

- 23 Karl Werkmeister (1898–1976). German diplomat. From 1921 on, in the German Foreign Service. Assigned to the German Legation in Budapest from 1936–1939 and 1940–1944.
- 24 Giuseppe di Talamo. Italian diplomat, Minister to Budapest from 1940–1942.
- 25 On December 13, 1941, Hungary declared that a state of war existed between Hungary and the United States and the United Kingdom. The government of the United States and President Roosevelt realized that Hungary was acting under duress and on June 2, 1942, President Roosevelt openly expressed his awareness in his message to Congress.
- 26 This framed photograph is in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation, Kelecsény, Hungary. In 2006, the United States Ambassador to Hungary, George Herbert Walker III, cousin of then President George Walker Bush, visited Kelecsény and is shown admiring the photograph of his predecessor taken 65 years previously. See: *Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. 52, 202–203, Summer-Autumn 2011, “U.S. Envoy Herbert C. Pell and Hungary in 1941”, where this photograph is reproduced. A letter from Olive Pell is included in the Appendix.
- 27 Pierre Laval (1883–1945). French politician. Prime Minister from 1931–1932, 1935–1936, July 1940–December 1940, and from 1942–1944. Executed for treason after the war.
- 28 István Horthy (1904–1942). Older son of the Regent. Vice Regent from 1942 until his death in an airplane crash on August 20, 1942.
- 29 László Ravasz (1882–1975). From 1918 Lutheran Bishop of Hungary; from 1939 member of the Upper House of Parliament.
- 30 Sándor Raffay (1886–1947). Lutheran Bishop from 1918; member of the Upper House of Parliament from 1939.
- 31 Gyula Kádár (1898–1982). Military officer, colonel general, chief of the Bureau of Information and Press at the General Staff. Kádár’s original letter to Antal Ullein-Reviczky date October 13, 1943 is in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 32 Ferenc Szombathelyi (1887–1946). Military officer, chief of the General Staff. Born May 7, 1887 in Győr. At age of 15, entered the Pécs Military Academy; graduated 1906 as a cadet Warrant Officer. Promoted to Second Lieutenant in 1907 and First Lieutenant in 1912. Entered World War One as a junior staff officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, emerging in 1918 with the rank of captain. Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he enlisted in the Hungarian army, rising through the ranks; was appointed Chief of General Staff and Commander-in-Chief in 1941, leading the Hungarian army for the major part of the war, until—on April 19, 1944—at German insistence, was replaced as Chief of Defence. At war’s end, he was handed over to the Communist Yugoslav authorities who tried him for alleged war crimes in 1946. Was rehabilitated in Hungary after the fall of the Communist

regime, and in 2002 a memorial in his honour was unveiled in the grounds of the Military History Museum, Budapest.

- 33 István Újszászy (1893–1945). Military officer, Lt. General; head of military intelligence, founder of the State Security Centre (Államvédelmi Központ), 1942. Captured by the Soviets in 1944, handed over to Hungarian Communist security personnel, killed in 1945.
- 34 Jenő Cholnoky (1870–1950). University professor; from 1920 member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- 35 Lajos Mezey (1891–?). Lawyer, politician, Member of Parliament, 1933–1944.
- 36 Imre Martsekényi (1898–?). Politician, from 1935 Member of Parliament.
- 37 National Veterans' Association (Országos Tűzharcos Szövetség). Its president was Count Joseph Takách-Tolvay, and from 1941, its co-president: Antal Ullein-Reviczky. The first Hungarian Veterans' Association was established on October 5, 1929, within an existing organization known as Front-line Fighter or Veterans' Association (MOVE Frontharcos Szövetség) until February 17, 1932. In the meantime, on December 24, 1931, the Hungarian Minister of Interior created the National Veterans' Association (Országos Frontharcos Szövetség), the first independent organization to represent the country's veterans. The organization was to serve the interests of those who had fought and sacrificed for their country during the First World War, and to ensure that they were honoured and recognized. Only those who could prove their front-line service were eligible to join. In September 1939, the name of the organization was changed to the Magyar Tűzharcos Szövetség (tűz, meaning fire, refers to gunfire), a more traditionally Hungarian term of reference. Supporters of the association were also welcomed, and in 1941, Hungarians who served in the Armed Forces but were not necessarily veterans of World War One, were also able to join. The focus of the organization—Hungarian national pride, military honour and camaraderie—continued through the Second World War, in 1942, veterans of the new conflict were given the same status as their First World War predecessors.

For the above summary, Lovice Ullein-Reviczky extends thanks to Peter Czink, VRNT President, International Hungarian Military History Preservation Society, Editor of *The New Hungarian Voice* and *Magyar Front*. The original *Magyar Front* was the weekly newspaper of the "Front-line Fighters Association," published from the early 1930s until the end of the Second World War.

- 38 Aladár Szegedy-Maszák (1903–1988). Diplomat. Political undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry, 1943–1944; ambassador to Washington, 1946–1947. Retired from foreign service in 1947. Worked for the Voice of America radio service until 1968.
- 39 Ribbentrop's stay in Hungary was from January 6–9, 1942. Mrs. Ullein-Reviczky notes in her diary: "Antal went at 10 a.m. to meet Ribbentrop. Then luncheon

given by István Bárczy at the Ritz. Evening 8.30 p.m. Ribbentrop's arrival was worth watching ..."

- 40 Wilhelm Keitel (1882–1946). German General; the Wehrmacht's Commander-in-Chief from 1938–1945. At the Nuremberg Trials he was condemned and executed. Visit to Hungary: January 20–22, 1942.
- 41 Gusztáv Jány (1883–1947). Military officer, Commander-in-Chief of the second Hungarian fighting force from 1942–1943. Later accused of war crimes and executed.
- 42 January 4–23, 1942.
- 43 The final count was 3,309 victims. See *Magyarország és a második világháború* (bibliographic data), pp. 387–393.
- 44 On January 29, 1942.
- 45 Bárdossy, László, *Magyar politika a mohácsi vész után* [Hungarian politics after the defeat at Mohács], (Budapest, 1943; second edition, Budapest, 1992).
- 46 Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer (1881–1948). Lawyer, anti-Nazi conservative politician. Minister of Interior, 1931–1935 and 1938–1944.
- 47 Lipót Baranyai (1894–1979). Economist, anti-Nazi politician. President of the Hungarian National Bank 1938–1943. Worked for the World Bank 1951–1959, and later for the Frankfurt Branch of the Deutsche Bank.
- 48 Károly Peyer (1881–1956). Engineer, Social Democrat politician. 1919–1920 Minister; 1922–1944 Member of Parliament; 1927–1944 Secretary General of the Trade Unions.
- 49 *Nemzeti Újság*, June 26, 1944.
- 50 Dr. László Bárdossy de Bárdos (December 10, 1890–January 10, 1946). Hungarian diplomat and politician who served as Prime Minister of Hungary from April 3, 1941–March 7, 1942. After the German occupation of Hungary in 1944, Bárdossy and his followers collaborated with Döme Sztójay and Ferenc Szálasi's Arrow Cross Party. After World War Two ended, Bárdossy was arrested and tried by a People's Court. He was found guilty of war crimes and collaboration with the Nazis, sentenced to death, and executed by firing squad in Budapest in 1946.

PART THREE

- 1 The function of this department was to supervise the watering of the chronically dry Hungarian Plain, the furthering of hydraulic and soil-improvement operations, and the organization of agricultural production.
- 2 Kállay lived in Italy until the end of 1953, then moved to New York and remained in the United States until his death in 1967.
- 3 Here Antal Ullein-Reviczky is talking about his own quill (pen) and how in the following text he will not fail his old friend—Miklós Kállay.

4 The Atlantic Charter (August 14, 1941)

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavour, with due respect to their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and more permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Winston S. Churchill

Source: Samuel Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 10 (1938–1950), 314.

5 Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942). SS officer. Shot by Czech resistance fighter.

- 6 Hans Frank (1900–1946). German minister. Sentenced to death at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials.
- 7 Emil Hácha (1872–1945). Czech politician, President of the Republic, 1938–39. In 1945 imprisoned as a war criminal and died in captivity.
- 8 Erich von Mannstein (1887–1973). German Field Marshal; defended Galicia with his army against the advancing Red Army.
- 9 The Nemzeti Kaszinó (National Casino) a club which embraced the whole of upper class Hungarian society, with the exception of Jews, had not a single Arrow Cross member, and 99% of the members were on the side of the Western democracies.
- 10 During his first visit, which he made during spring 1943, Prime Minister Kállay invoked the aid of Il Duce against German omnipotence; on that occasion he advocated the formation of an anti-German Balkan alliance comprising Hungary, Romania, Turkey and Greece.
- 11 Magyar Élet Pártja (MÉP). The Party of Hungarian Life won a huge majority of the seats of the Hungarian parliament in the Hungarian elections of 1939. This was a major breakthrough for the far right in Hungary. The party promoted nationalist and racist propaganda and its members sympathized with the Nazi Arrow Cross Party.
- 12 Béla Lukács (1892–1958). Army officer, lord lieutenant, politician, from 1940 President of the pro-German Agrarian Group of the Party of Hungarian Life (MÉP); 1942–1944 Minister without Portfolio responsible for military affairs.
- 13 The counter revolution against Béla Kun's Communist rule in 1919 began at Szeged, and the Szeged Idea refers to the strongly rightist and nationalistic ideals of the extreme anti-Communists.
- 14 Népszava (People's Voice), official daily newspaper of the Social Democratic party.
- 15 György Dózsa led a blood-soaked peasants' revolt in Hungary in 1514.
- 16 This refers to Tibor Eckhardt's move to the United States in autumn 1941.
- 17 Andor Jaross (1896–1946). Ethnic Hungarian politician from Slovakia and collaborator with the Nazis. As Minister for Regained Territories he was one of the 18 deputies who formed the Party of Hungarian Renewal in 1940 (a far right dissident group of the governing party). After the Nazi regime invaded Hungary in March 1944 and raised Nazi Döme Sztójay to the post of Prime Minister, Jaross was put in charge of the Interior Ministry. Removed from his post in August 1944, he made a brief return in October 1944, after the Nazis installed the Arrow Cross Party under Prime Minister Ferenc Szálasi. Condemned as a war criminal and executed.
- 18 *Pesti Hírlap*, June 7, 1944.
- 19 György Oláh (1902–1981). Extreme right-wing journalist, from 1938 editor of the Imrédy party journal, *Egyedül Vagyunk* (We are alone); from 1939 member of parliament.

- 20 Ion Antonescu (1882–1946). Romanian marshal and dictator, who stood entirely behind the Nazis and Hitler, was Prime Minister from 1940–1944. At the war trials he was tried for war crimes and executed.
- 21 King Michael's masterstroke refers to the coup d'état led by King Michael of Romania in 1944 against the pro-Nazi faction of Ion Antonescu, after the Axis front in North-eastern Romania collapsed under the Soviet offensive.
- 22 The American military censor, to verify Miklós Kállay's letter, translated it from the Hungarian into German and forwarded it to Stockholm. They made him sign this translation. The original letter is today in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 23 Christopher (Kristóf) Kállay (1916–2006). Eldest son of and private secretary to Miklós Kállay.
- 24 Nicholas 'Niki' (Miklós Jr.) Kállay (1918–1996). Middle son.
- 25 Bishop Áron Márton (1896–1980). Roman Catholic Bishop of Gyulafehérvár county.
- 26 Andrew (András) Kállay (1919–1995).
- 27 Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky (1939–).

PART FOUR

- 1 Dietrich von Jagow (1892–1945). German Obergruppenführer, from July 1941 to March 1944 German Minister to Budapest. Committed suicide at the end of the war.
- 2 Giuseppe Bastianini (1899–1961). Italian diplomat, Ciano's successor as Foreign Secretary.
- 3 Zoltán Máriássy (1881–1963). Diplomat, from 1929 chief of cabinet to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, later Ambassador to Ankara and then to Rome. Original letter in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 4 Cyril James Cumberbatch (1873–1944). British Consul, Istanbul. The summer villa was in Kandilli, on the Bosphorus, and this is where Lovice Louisa Grace Cumberbatch, spouse of Antal Ullein-Reviczky, was born on August 12, 1904.
- 5 András Frey (1904–1983). Foreign correspondent for several Hungarian newspapers, since 1949 resident in the USA.
- 6 The original draft comprising 6 pages written by Antal Ullein-Reviczky, in French, is in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 7 László Veress (1908–1980). Lawyer, diplomat, from 1939 press officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1947 settled in Britain.
- 8 Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen (1886–1971). British diplomat. Ambassador to Turkey, 1939–1944.

- 9 Andor Gellért (1907–1990). Lawyer, politician. In the 1930s assistant to Premier Pál Teleki. In 1943 Press Attaché at the Hungarian Legation, Stockholm, where he had ties to OSS and British Intelligence. After the war he established himself in the USA and worked for the Voice of America.
- 10 Suemasa Okamoto. Envoyé extraordinaire et Ministre Plenipotentiaire, (13B, Villagatan, Stockholm. Tél. 20 89 90.) (From “Liste du Corps Diplomatique à Stockholm, Janvier 1944”). Original in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation. It is likely that this statement came from the office of the Japanese Military Attaché, General Onodera; the importance of this office was considered so great that it took precedence over the Japanese Legation at Stockholm.
- 11 Lajos Csataj (1886–1944). Army officer, 1943–1944 Minister of Defence. During the Szálasi regime he was arrested by the Gestapo and committed suicide by poison together with his wife in the Defence Ministry Hospital on November 18, 1944.
- 12 Original, written by Antal Ullein-Reviczky in Hungarian, is in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 13 Christian Günther (1886–1966). Swedish writer, diplomat and from 1939–1944 Foreign Minister in Sweden’s National Unity Government.
- 14 These two original telegrams are preserved in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 15 Sir Victor Mallet (1893–1969). British diplomat and author. Minister to Stockholm 1940–1945. He was a godson of Queen Victoria and his book, “Life with Queen Victoria” was published in 1968.
- 16 Herschel Vespasian Johnson (1894–1966). American diplomat from North Carolina. Minister to Sweden between December 12, 1941, and April 28, 1946.
- 17 Alexandra Mikhajlovna Kollontay (1872–1952). Russian revolutionary, diplomat and writer. From 1923 served in numerous diplomatic posts, during World War II Soviet Union Minister to Stockholm.
- 18 Carl Johan Arthur Bernadotte (1916–2012), since 1951 Count of Wisborg, formerly Prince Carl Johan of Sweden.
- 19 Elin Kerstin Wijkmark (1910–1987).
- 20 For further press cuttings see Appendix.
- 21 Kálmán Rátkay (1894–1974). Nazi journalist, from 1921–1938 editor of the *Magyar Falu*, from 1939–1944 editor of the Nazi Arrow Cross journal *Magyarság*.
- 22 András Mecsér (1883–?). Military officer, Nazi leader, from 1935–1939 Arrow Cross deputy.
- 23 Original in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 24 Ödön Málnási (1889–1970). Nazi historian, member of the Arrow Cross party and later of the Volksbund. Sentenced in 1946 to ten years of hard labour. After 1956 moved to Austria.

- 25 Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart (1881–1957). Senior British diplomat, politician. He is best remembered for his hard-line stance towards Germany during and after the Second World War.
- 26 István Mlotay (1883–1963). Right-wing Nazi journalist and politician. From 1934–1944 editor of *Új Magyarország*. Emigrated in 1945.
- 27 Virginio Gayda (1885–1944). Italian journalist, editorialist of *Giornale d'Italia*. Fell victim to a bombing raid.
- 28 “Tony-partisan”: abbreviated form of Antal (Anthony in English) Ullein-Reviczky.
- 29 Between May 15 and July 4, 1944, when Regent Horthy put a stop to the deportations, 437,000 Jews had been deported from the country. Some 320,000 of them perished.
- 30 The original of this letter, written by Antal Ullein-Reviczky in French, is in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation. That same day, April 8, Minister Ullein-Reviczky forwarded a copy of his appeal to the British and American governments, via their official representatives in Stockholm, the British Minister, Sir Victor Mallet and the American Minister, Herschel V. Johnson, with the following note:

Dear Sir Victor,

May I forward you a copy of the letter I have just written to H. E. Mr. Günther in the case of the Jewish persecutions that are taking place in my country.

With kindest regards,

Believe me, Mr. Minister,

Antal Ullein-Reviczky.

April 8, 1944

- 31 Gustav Adolf V (1858–1950). From 1907 until his death King of Sweden.
- 32 Reply dated April 15, 1944, sent by the American Minister, Herschel V. Johnson, to Antal Ullein-Reviczky. Original in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.

Stockholm, April 15, 1944.

Mr. Minister,

Thank you for your note of April 8 with which you enclosed a copy of a communication which you addressed that same day to His Excellency the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the persecution of the Jews which is now being carried out in Hungary.

Believe me, Mr. Minister,

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Herschel Johnson

- 33 Latin for “danger in delay”.
- 34 Mrs. Antal Ullein-Reviczky notes in her diary: “At 4 p.m. Bolgár Antal came. A young Jew who escaped from Hungary-Sopron-Vienna-Stockholm, Extraordinary!”
- 35 Cordell Hull (1871–1955). American politician. He is best known as the longest serving Secretary of State, holding the position for 11 years (1933–1944) in the administration of President Roosevelt during much of World War II.
- 36 Felix Parcher Jr. (1907–1956). Temporary chargé d’affaires in Stockholm.
- 37 From the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 38 From the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 39 General Géza Lakatos (1890–1967). Military officer, from 1944 commander-in-chief of the 1st Hungarian Army, from August 29, 1944, Prime Minister.
- 40 General Gustav Hennyey (1888–1977). Military officer, from August 29, 1944, Foreign Minister.
- 41 Erik Carlsson Boheman (1895–1979). Undersecretary of State of the Swedish government during the Second World War.
- 42 György Szabó (1891–?). Diplomat, Hungarian Minister to Helsinki.
- 43 Ferenc Marosy (1893–1986). Lawyer, diplomat, from 1941 to 1944 in Zagreb, from 1944—following the defection of György Szabó—in Helsinki.
- 44 From the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation, text of Antal Ullein-Reviczky’s original notes dated October 12, 1944:

As the Hungarian quisling Chargé d’Affaires here has received instructions to forward my telegrams, I sent a message to General Hennyey telling him that if they had acted according to my suggestions wired by Marosy on September 27 the Hungarian question could have been discussed in Moscow. Now it is too late for *pourparlers*; they have to deal with the Russian Army. The problem of Hungary will come up again at the Peace Conference, but there we shall have no trump in hand any more.

This afternoon at 2 p.m. the BBC broadcast information from its Stockholm correspondent according to which Hungary should have asked the Allies for an armistice in Stockholm. Questions were put to me by Demaitre (Daily Express) and Shenky (A.P.). I told them that I know nothing about these rumours; besides, I would certainly have refused to act as Horthy’s or his government’s representative. I could only represent the Hungarian people now under the Nazi yoke.

At 6 p.m. I got the text of the following telegram sent to Parcher from the Hungarian Foreign Minister: “I received your message. A new situation has arisen, the question is still under close consideration. Please keep in touch.”

I immediately instructed Parcher through Homonnay to inform General Hennyey of the above mentioned BBC story, and to add that absolute discretion should be observed in this matter, otherwise every step would be paralysed by political opponents. It should not be forgotten furthermore that I intend to be completely independent from the government. And to hurry up, because there is no time to lose.

That is all for the moment.

Couldn't the BBC be instructed to shut up?

Stockholm, October 12, 1944.

A.U-R. (monogram in pencil)

- 45 Horthy's proclamation broadcast by the Hungarian Radio on Sunday, October 15, 1944.
- 46 Ferenc Szálasi (1897–1946). Leader of the National Socialist Arrow Cross Party. During his brief rule, Szálasi's men murdered 10–15,000 Hungarian Jews. After the war he was captured by American troops and returned to Hungary. He was tried by the People's Tribunal in Budapest and sentenced to death for war crimes and high treason.
- 47 Original text in the archive of the Ullein-Reviczky Antal Foundation.
- 48 You have indeed returned, through your daughter, Lovice Mária, who brought you back in spirit, and to great acclaim, in 1993. Today your memory is still being honoured by all true Hungarians.

CONCLUSION

- 1 The United Nations is an international organisation founded on October 24, 1945, by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security.



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